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Snider, Denton Jaques
Shakespearian drama

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THE
Shakespearian Drama.

A COMMENTARY

BY

DENTON J. SNIDER.

1741-1925.

THE HISTORIES.

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INTRODUCTION.

Fifteen plays of Shakespeare may be termed Histories — a name doubtless employed by the poet himself to designate a certain kind of dramatic composition. Exactly to what plays of his own he may have applied it, cannot now be told; but it naturally belongs to those works which give historic phases of the great peoples of the world — Greece, Rome, England. Thus we behold a line of his dramas extending from the prelude of History to the modern world.

It is true that these fifteen plays do not have historic continuity in external events; still this continuity lies back of them and is suggested by them; they have it ideally. There are breaks in the chain of occurrences, but the electric spark of thought leaps across the interval, and joins them in the idea. Now, this connecting idea, if we wish to grasp the historical series as a whole, must be a main point of study. That is, the final view of these plays must behold them as one with the movement of Universal History. Single and disconnected though the stars may be, they reveal the firmament.

In this grand sweep of events, the individual character remains what it was shown to be in the

other plays. Yet, it takes a new phase. An historic element plays into it, which it did not show before, at least not so distinctly. Lear has pride, which, in his case, is the disease of absolute authority. Coriolanus also has pride, which, we observe, is the disease of his class; but in the latter case, it is the pride of the Roman patrician, which must be subordinated to the State ere Rome can conquer the world. Thus the pride of Coriolanus has an historical, yes, a world-historical import, which the pride of Lear has not. Antony and Romeo are both tragic love-heroes, but Romeo's love is a personal matter with its particular relations to family and society, while Antony's love is a world-historical matter, with its political relations to Rome and Egypt. The one involves a town in a street brawl, the other involves the world in a war by land and sea. The one makes a local tale, the other makes history.

Over the Tragedies and Comedies we saw a Divine Order, in which the individual acted, and by which he was at last judged. If he collided with it, and persisted in his collision, he was a tragic character and perished; but if he repented and reconciled himself with it, he was saved. This was the poetic or ideal Divine Order, whose two main principles were Justice and Love — Justice ruling in Tragedy, Love or Mediation in Comedy. In the Histories there is also a Divine

Order, not purely ideal, but real or in the movement of realization. This we may call the World's History, which is the process of the ideal Divine Order making itself real and a fact in the world.

The Histories are, accordingly, not so ideal as the Tragedies and Comedies, which round themselves off to completeness in a single play. That is, the individual character and the society make their spiritual circuit in one work, thus imaging the ordering idea from beginning to end. Macbeth, for instance, from putting down the traitor becomes the traitor and is himself put down—is subsumed under the law of his own deed; thus his individual cycle is completed, and reveals the controlling order in which the man acts. In *As You Like It*, there is a whole social cycle passed through, which begins with the flight from society and ends in the return to society.

In the Histories Justice and Love are also ruling forces, but not so ideally as in the Tragedies and Comedies. Julius Cæsar, though the bearer of the new order, perishes in the play named from him, along with Brutus and Cassius, who are enemies of that order. Thus it is often in history; Socrates, the individual, is put to death, but his spirit lives on. This is not ideal justice. History has the lurking dagger of chance in its events, that dagger may smite friend as well as foe. The individuals on both sides

may perish in the accident of time, then the question is, Which of the two has the World-Spirit chosen? Is it Cæsar or Brutus?

The Histories of Shakespeare stand in an important relation to the mediæval Mystery Plays, whose function it was to show the discipline of Providence as laid down in the Old and New Testaments. The Histories also show the discipline of Providence, but as laid down in the historic events of the race. The one, however, is religious, the other secular; the one follows on the Hebrew line of development, the other on the Heathen line; the one is Semitic, the other is Aryan. The break from the Mystery Plays is the fruit of the Renaissance, which went back to the classical world for art and culture, and of which Shakespeare was the poetic bloom. His entire historical series might be called the Mystery Play of the Ages, from which, however, the miraculous element has been essentially eliminated. God and the Devil no longer appear in person as dramatic characters; still they are present, though they too have become secularized. Thus the poet has given us the Drama of Universal History in its own dramatic form.

Still these fifteen plays taken together are a fragment. Each of them is but a small finished link in the great unfinished and unfinishable chain of History. They are like the solar system with its group of planets, each of which has an orbit

that perpetually returns into itself and makes the cycle complete. But the solar system too, with all its planets and their orbits, is itself but a huge planet, as it were, sweeping in a still vaster movement beyond — whither ? So there are the small, complete and known cycles interlinking into the great, incomplete and unknown cycle, of which the planetary world is but a segment. Likewise, Shakespeare's Histories are but a fragment of History. Still the law, the order is known, both in the material and the ethical universe; whithersoever the solar system may rush in the stretches of boundless space, it will have a sun, moral as well as physical, at the center giving light.

A word upon the materials used in these plays. As in the Tragedies and Comedies, so also in the Histories Shakespeare takes his materials wherever he can lay hands on them, in drama, chronicle, biography; they are his by the divine right of poetic seizure. He does not invent them, any more than he invents the English language which he uses. He orders, transforms, deepens; incidents, characters, plot are furnished him from the storehouse of Time, where lies also his inheritance; these he takes and transfigures into poetry. His originality is shown in the right use of his materials; his creative power is the poetic transfiguration of all that he touches.

For the historical plays he drew chiefly from

two authorities: Holinshed for English affairs, and Plutarch for antiquity. Both of these authors have certain natural affinities with Shakespeare. Both have a thread of the mythical spirit running through their historical accounts, a touch of the supernatural brings them into a kinship with poetry. Also they drop easily, at important moments, from narrative into dialogue or oration direct, and thus suggest the dramatist. Both are, to a degree, moralists, and draw the lesson from history, thus calling attention to its ethical purport.

Then there is a great difference between the two: The modern writer is an annalist, the ancient writer is a biographer; that is, the former describes the successive events in Time, having his eye on the stream of History; while the latter describes characters, having his eye on the individuals in that stream. It is a significant move in Shakespeare's development that he began with the annalist and English History, and went back to the biographer and Ancient History. His interest as well as his life deepened from incidents to individuals. He did not take to Plutarch till after the year 1600, when he was thirty-six years old, as it is probable he did not use the ancient biographer for his portrait of Theseus in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. But he seems to have clung to Holinshed all his life; during his early, middle and late periods we find materials which

are taken from the English chronicler worked up into historical plays.

I. HISTORY AND POETRY. — The Historical Plays necessarily bring to mind the difference between History and Poetry. On this subject the passage of Aristotle in his *Poetics* has become the most famous utterance of literary criticism. It may be translated as follows: —

“The difference between the historian and the poet is not that the one speaks in verse and the other in prose. The real distinction is that the one relates what has happened, the other what might have happened. On this account, Poetry is a more philosophical and a more excellent thing than History, for History is conversant with the Particular, Poetry with the Universal.”

Aristotle thus draws a sharp distinction between the historical and the poetical work, the latter being more philosophical, that is, truer, more universal than the former. But in Shakespeare we have Histories which are also poems; in them the Particular of History has been transmuted into the Universal of Poetry. This is the magic which we are now to witness: one detail, rightly handled, will reveal the spirit of the man or time, while many details may dim it or lose it altogether. History is to be transmuted into Poetry and become a higher truth. It is not intended to say that the poet is to do without the Particular; on the contrary he must have it, but

he must make it bear the impress of the Universal, which it has not, or has very faintly, in History. To the words of the ancient philosopher we may add the lines of the modern poet: —

Wer ruft das Einzelne zur allgemeinen Weihe,
Wo es in herrlichen Accorden schlaegt? —

The answer intended by Goethe to this question, runs as follows: It is the poet who calls the Particular to its universal consecration. (See *Faust*, Prelude on the Stage.)

But what is this Universal, of which poet and philosopher speak? It is, in one form or other, what has been called the Ethical World, with the collisions thereof and the harmonies, revealing itself in the outer movement of events as well as the inner movement of the soul. The institutions of man—Family, State, Society, World-Spirit,—are the chief manifestations of this Ethical World, which, however, must find their living power in the individual. Both sides must be present in all high Poetry. We have already unfolded and applied these principles to the *Legendary Drama* of Shakespeare, which embraces the *Tragedies* and *Comedies*.

But in the *Historical Drama* a new field opens to the poet, bringing with it certain modifications in his procedure. The domestic relations of man are placed in the background, and the political element becomes paramount. The *Family*

occupies still a position as an ethical institution, but it is now subordinate in importance to the State. Consequently the species of drama is different, and a different kind of effect is produced. In the Family the emotions of man are at home, and manifest themselves in their greatest intensity; the collisions occurring in it, therefore, appeal in the strongest manner to the feelings. But the State rests more upon intelligence, and is further removed from our daily life and its sympathies, though it must not be thought that the State is devoid of an emotional basis in human nature. Indeed, love of country is capable of absorbing every other activity in certain periods of great national peril; still, in the ordinary life of men, the Family is necessarily the more immediate institution. The main *pathos* of the Historical Drama will, therefore, be different from that of the Domestic Drama. This difference of substance is necessarily followed by a difference of form.

The form of the Historical Drama lies between pure Fable and pure History. The Fable is a yielding, flexible material, which the Poet moulds freely to his own conception and gives it a shape corresponding to the thought. It is not trammelled by rigid Fact, by fixed Time or Place, and, hence, its adaptation for creative Art surpasses that of History. The poet reflects in the Fable the world in which he lives — he portrays the

consciousness of his age. With this unstained plastic material he is enabled to show the conflicts of the time in their spiritual purity — free from partisan rancor, from religious bigotry, and from all other disturbing influences. The Artist, therefore, works most truly when he takes the thought of his own time and pours it into the remote mythological form, which may be made pliant to his gentlest touch. But once let the historical form be taken to express the same thing, let an important historical character or conflict of the present time be introduced in its reality, then the flood-gates of prejudice and passion are opened, and the work will be torn to pieces by opposing factions. This is very far from being an æsthetic effect. Most peoples have created a fabulous period before the dawn of History as a dwelling-place for the imagination — it is the paradise of poetic forms, which never have to jostle against the hard reality.

But History has been enacted ; its form is given and is inflexible. The fact cannot be bent, and remain fact ; in so far as the Poet does bend it, he verges toward fiction — he makes History a fable. The age has assumed that fixed shape ; none other can take its place. Men have acted ; there they stand, with their names and deeds written upon the parchment. History, being thus crystallized, is far more inclined to break than to bend in a poetic treatment ; but its un-

yielding materials may be considerably softened by going far back in time and approaching the era of Fable. The Historical Drama is, therefore, composed of two somewhat antithetic elements — History and Poetry. But its material form must remain historical, though the fabulous or ideal element may vary from a mere drop to quite the half of the play. There may be only a slight shifting of Time and Place, or there may be a large group of unhistorical characters, with new incidents. Shakespeare's usage differs in different dramas.

But there is a point where the Poet must not vary. He has to portray the conflicts of the age which he undertakes to represent, with an absolute fidelity. These conflicts are also the profoundest content of Poetry; hence History and Poetry, in their ultimate thought, come together — have the same fundamental principle. One inner spirit animates two distinct forms, and even these forms are united in the Historical Drama. Still, the Poet looks back through the atmosphere of his own age; he cannot live out of his own time. This fact always determines the coloring, and often the selection, of his theme, yet he ought to show the true spiritual struggle of the epoch which he has chosen to body forth. Shakespeare undoubtedly beheld the Lancastrian period with Elizabethan eyes, though he has given the actual historical conflict of that period. His

portraiture of the Past is unavoidably tinged with the consciousness of the Present. Hence the Historical Drama has in it a kind of double reflection, being partly of what is and partly of what has been, which twofoldness is inherent in the species.

The Historical Drama is the Drama of nationality; this is its truest and most exalted function. The institution with which History deals is the State; it subordinates all other institutions and principles. Its expression in Art has demanded a special artistic form, which attempts to reconcile the real elements of History with the ideal shapes of Poetry. The domestic and other species of Drama seek the Fable as their most adequate material, but the Historical Drama looks to the records of the nation and to the deeds of the national heroes. The emotion to which it appeals is patriotism, which elevates the individual into one existence with his country, and Art thus inculcates the noblest devotion of human character.

In the ordinary Drama the deed is brought home to the doer in person, the action of the individual returns upon him in the course of a single play. It is thus complete in itself; reward or retribution is shown in the result. But the historical deed continues for all time to produce its effect; it is thus transmitted far beyond its return to the individual. For the nation partakes

of it and carries it forward; and, as the life of the nation endures, the deed of a man becomes perennial in its consequences. The act, though performed by a person, is in truth national, or, possibly, world-historical. Hence arises the necessity of transcending the limits of a single play in order to bring together actions and their remote consequences. Therefore it is that we have the two *Tetralogies* — the *Lancastrian* and the *Yorkian* — each being a series of four plays intimately connected. Or, if we wish to take a broader view, therefore it is that we possess a grand *Dramatic Epos* of ten plays, portraying and linking together in thought transitional periods of the English nation. Or, if we desire to grasp the complete generalization, therefore it is that Shakespeare has presented to us the colossal outlines of a world-historical Drama of fifteen plays, being forced to such a lofty and comprehensive theme by the grandeur and universality of his genius. Thus he makes the deed run through time almost from the beginning of positive History.

II. *OUTLINE OF THE HISTORICAL DRAMA.* — Shakespeare, to a certain degree, wrote his historical plays backward. The epoch nearest in time to his own age is the subject of some of his earliest productions; the blood, fate and swift retribution so often seen in the Wars of the Roses fascinated the youthful mind of the drama-

tist. The Yorkian Tetralogy, which portrays a period of national disintegration, accompanied with horrible crime and butchery, is the least retrospective, the most immediate, of his works; it seeks after strong effects by means which may often be justly called sensational. To the riper age of the Poet belongs the Lancastrian Tetralogy, which exhibits the nation in a constructive epoch, ridding itself of a worthless monarch, subduing rebellion at home, and conquering its hereditary enemy abroad. He thus goes back in thought as he advances in years. Still later are the Roman Historical plays; the Poet has now transcended the limits of nationality, and necessarily begins to consider the movement of universal history. Patriotic fervor subsides into a more calm development of colliding principles, and his stand-point is no longer national, but world-historical.

This is the natural development of the individual mind; it recedes from the Present, seeking the lessons of the Past, and returns laden with the spoils of centuries. The world of to-day is a mystery—indeed, a Babylonian confusion—if we cannot trace its constructive elements in that which has been. As the man grows older he becomes more retrospective; of necessity he keeps looking back further and further in the history of his race to reach eternal principles. To trace the development of the individual Shakespeare we should by all means follow these plays after the

order of their composition, which is for the most part backwards in time. As he recedes in the Past he deepens in thought, expression, and treatment.

Still, this is not the highest method of studying these works. History is chronological; its stream cannot be turned back by any individual standing in its course — not even by Shakespeare. Its principles are to be shown by the Poet; the deepest thought of the epoch must be given by him; its profoundest struggle is always his most worthy theme. It is at this point, and at this point only, that Poetry and History meet. It is not necessary that the externalities of a nation or a period be given in their literal fidelity; this is, in fact, impossible. The costume, the language, the general coloring, may all be different from what they really were, but the spiritual conflict of the time must be shown in its verity. If, therefore, the Poet has taken a series of historical themes, they can be truly considered only in the order of history, which is successive in time; thus the thought of each epoch can be seen in its connection with the thought of succeeding epochs. A full explanation of Shakespeare's historical labors will demand something of a Philosophy of History. A slight sketch will show the outlines of his thought in this direction.

Of the Greek historical age the Poet has left us no adequate portraiture, though the scene of

action in several dramas is placed in the ancient Hellenic world. *Troilus and Cressida* is a decided approach toward an historical play, but, inasmuch as the subject is fabulous, and was a myth to the old Greeks themselves, it lacks one of the essential distinctions of history. Still, it exhibits the inherent principle of Greece in its political manifestation — the story of the Trojan war was always the best picture of Hellenism. Shakespeare has distinctly stated that the great fault of the Argive host before Troy was lack of subordination — the individual asserted himself too strongly; authority — and, hence, organization — became impossible. This was the prime defect of Greece during her historical period also; she sought an absolute autonomy for state, tribe, community, city, individual. The result was internal strife and jealousy, in which all united action of the nation was generally lost. Thus the army before Ilium is an image of the Grecian world, and is suffering from the same malady which ultimately destroyed Greece; yet much of the special coloring of *Troilus and Cressida* is modern to a degree that makes it appear incongruous. This play has also the peculiarity of being the most reflective of all Shakespeare's writings, though its scene is laid in the most remote time. It naturally takes its place between the purely legendary and the purely historical dramas,

forming a transition from the one and an introduction to the other.

But it is Rome which exercises the strongest fascination over the Poet. Here, too, we have the assertion of individuality — not, however, that which excludes other cities and nations, but that which includes the whole world in the grasp of its ambition. Assimilation was the fundamental principle of Rome; it sought to make all peoples Roman. Its intense nationality assailed nationality, destroyed the same, and therein destroyed itself. Because it was based on conquest, it naturally bore within its own bosom the germ of destruction. The strong national life of Rome subdued all to itself, both within and without; the negative sweep of its career involved the Family at home and the Nation abroad — that is, the Roman State sacrificed the domestic relation, and sought to wipe out the principle of nationality from the face of the earth. But it repaid the ruin which it wrought with infinite blessings. The universal sway of the Roman soldier has long since departed, but the universal sway of Roman spirit still prevails in our laws and municipal institutions.

The series of Roman Historical plays will show various phases of development in the Roman principle. The prologue is *Coriolanus*, which exhibits this people in preparation for the conquest of the world. The drama portrays mainly

the internal struggles of Rome, to subordinate which produces so much strength of character. The State gets rid of the mighty individual in *Coriolanus*, and finds an instrument for counter-acting his hostility. The State absorbs the Family — even in its supreme female representative, the mother; Volumnia cares not for her son as son, but only as Roman. The State subjects Political Parties, which have to acknowledge it as their ultimate principle. The training is severe, but essential for the assurance of victory; the Roman national spirit must show itself more intense than any other, if its destiny be to subdue all nations.

The world is conquered, and the great transition takes place from Republican Rome to Imperial Rome. The mighty conqueress had absorbed all peoples into herself, was gradually changed in character, and lost her primitive principle. Unity under one government has been her policy; this unity must logically be carried into her institutions; the multiplicity of the Senate and the People must sink into the unity of the absolute Monarch. To this great revolution are devoted two plays — *Julius Cæsar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* — which form the culmination of the Roman Historical series. The former introduces at once the heroic individual, who has already unified in himself the whole Roman world. Between him and the supporters of the old constitution a con-

flict arises, which destroys him, though his principle is triumphant. There is, however, no single individual left who can unite all the contending elements; hence the play of *Julius Cæsar* stops with the Triumvirate — a mere breathing-place in the rapid flight toward Imperialism.

In *Antony and Cleopatra* the transition is completed; the three men of the Triumvirate are reduced to one, who is now the Emperor. The career of Rome cannot stop till all known nations are consolidated into one government, under one law, and administered by one ruler. It is a world-historical epoch, for the whole world participates in the change. To make the thought of these two plays complete, the earlier period of Cæsar's life, embracing his struggle with, and triumph over, Pompey, ought to be supplied. It is manifest that the Poet had mastered the historical details and thought out the conflicting principles of that time. Thus no link would be missing; the cycle would be full; the transition from the Republic to the Empire would be shown in all essential phases. But any intention on the part of the Poet to write such a drama cannot be proven.

The result of Roman conquest and civil organization was the destruction of the nations. The world became Roman; it was assimilated; a dull uniformity resulted, which deadened all vigor of

mind and body. Nationality must be restored to the human race, the massive Roman Empire must be broken to fragments, and each fragment wrought into a new nation. This is accomplished by the Northern Barbarians, who fall upon the enervated people of the South; each tribe takes a slice of territory. It is a time of social disintegration, in which the youthful Shakespeare found a theme as congenial as the Yorkian Tetralogy. For here *Titus Andronicus* must be placed; although under protest, it will have to be admitted into the series of historical plays, and into Shakespeare's dramatic family. In particular, his authorship of it cannot be rejected without undermining the external evidence upon which the most authentic of his plays repose. At this point the Roman Historical series comes to an end, having delineated the Roman world in its early struggles, in its culmination, and in its close.

The restoration of nationality to Europe is the chief work of the Middle Ages. This is the next grand world-historical movement — the rise and development of the modern nation. The Teutonic tribe adopts the Roman law and institutions; the result is a wholly new world, composed of individual States living together like the members of a common organization. The family of nations is the friendly title which is often given to it, and which it, in the main, deserves. Of

this family England may be fairly considered as the worthiest member in its political development. Nationality is its strongest principle, and, in general, it has acknowledged the same principle for other countries. Still, England has attempted the subjugation of its neighbors at various times, and thus has not been wholly consistent. But such attempts have brought in their train great disasters, in which the conquests have been lost and the peace of the land disturbed. The general result, notwithstanding, has been individual freedom and national autonomy. It has, however, taken a long and intense struggle to attain this end.

Shakespeare has also employed his pen upon this greatest world-historical theme — the rise of the modern nation. Moreover, he has taken very naturally the happiest example, England, which was his own native land. Ten English Historical plays are the glorious fruit of his inspiration, and no poet has ever so truly shown the spirit of his country. The English nationality, in its conflicts and in its triumphs, is the central pivot upon which the entire series moves. It has to struggle with its own weak and wicked kings; it rushes into foreign conquest and brings untold calamities upon itself in violating its own truest principle; it finally completes its political enfranchisement by subordinating Church to State. Thus the last fetter of the

nation is thrown off in freeing itself from an external spiritual domination.

Nationality is, therefore, the theme and the inspiration of the English Historical plays. For this reason they appeal most profoundly to the human heart, touching its noblest emotions, while they are at the same time true to the supreme political principle of modern times, which is the autonomy of the State. Also, the Roman Historical plays are strongly national, yet with a profound glance into a power above the Nation, namely, the world-historical principle.

III. COLLISIONS OF THE HISTORICAL DRAMA. — Next we are to consider the conflicts which arise in this sphere. Nationality has to assert itself against other institutional principles and ethical relations of man. The result is that many things which seem of the most sacred and binding nature are quietly set aside or openly trampled underfoot. The nation demands a supreme sacrifice; what, then, can be excluded? Let us try to separate and carefully distinguish the relative worth of the conflicting principles; otherwise, the Historical World — is a mass of confusion and contradiction. The main point is to see everything in its true limitation, and not from a one-sided dogmatism to pass a sweeping condemnation upon the actions of the great characters of history who are engaged in struggles

wholly different from those of ordinary life, and who have to violate what is, in order to pave the way for what is to be.

The first of these conflicts begins with the individual, and may be stated as the conflict between nationality and morality. Every person is supposed to have a conscience, which is the guide of action; he follows his ideas of right and wrong in his daily transactions with his neighbor. Veracity, Honesty, Candor, Humanity, are moral virtues whose validity everybody must acknowledge, but a national exigency not infrequently arises which demands their sacrifice. Which side shall be taken? Recollect that the question demands a real opposition; there must be a conflict which cannot be avoided, and one principle or the other has to be followed. If a man rests absolutely in the moral consciousness, then he can find no justification for war, for diplomacy — indeed, for nationality. The most potent instruments for maintaining the independence of the State he cannot employ, since that often involves the deception, plunder, and even destruction of his fellow-men. Such actions are assuredly not moral, and that person alone is a consistent moralist who refuses to defend his country by any species of violence or cunning.

Now, the Historical Drama, if it enforce nationality as the essential and supreme object of human action, will exhibit just this conflict,

whose only solution is the subordination of the moral to the national principle. The supposition always is that a case arises in which the two cannot be reconciled; one must be taken to the exclusion of the other. The great statesman, whose eye is always on the Nation, may be expected to show his strongest and most characteristic trait by his choice at the point of conflict in the two principles. So, too, the national hero is national by virtue of his total absorption into his nation. It is not intended to say that every violation of morality by public men is necessary or justifiable; they are too often immoral when there is no need—that is, where there is no conflict between moral and political duty, or where the moral obligation is far stronger than the national necessity.

But the other side must not be left out of sight nor omitted in the Drama. Even the most justifiable violation of morality carries with it retribution—the wrong must bring its penalty; justice is the absolute principle in the government of the world. Such is the tragic destiny of the Great Man; he is bound to fall into guilt in accomplishing the most beneficent revolution, and that guilt is brought home to him in punishment. He suffers for the evil which he has done, yet he had to do the evil in order to realize the infinitely greater good. It has long been remarked that the great historical character is not happy; he is

rent asunder by two warring fates, each of which tears off a fragment of his flesh whichever way he may turn. The nation, too, which permits moral violation, even for the sake of its own existence, admits into its bosom a lurking enemy, which can be expelled only after years of pain and struggle. Still, the responsibility must be taken by the individual and by the nation; life and progress often demand the destruction of what is prescribed and established, with all its fearful consequences.

The second collision of the State is with the Family. Now we enter the institutional world, of which, however, some individual must be the representative. The most obvious form of this collision is the case of the father who is taken to maintain the endangered nation, though his wife and children perish. It is true that, if such were the result universally, the country would be destroyed anyhow. But the real necessity lies in the fact that without the nation the Family cannot exist; for the loss of nationality involves the uncertainty, if not the loss, of all other institutions, while the defense of nationality is their defense. But here comes the sacrifice—the maintenance of the nation calls for that member of the Family by whom alone it is supported and protected. Thus one particular family may perish; still, the institution of the Family is thereby defended and preserved, for that institution—

the State — whose chief purpose is to secure all other institutions, is thereby maintained. But, if the State perish, the whole institutional world follows after, or is saved only by the caprice of the conqueror. Hence it is an accident if the Family survives when the nation perishes, and it is also an accident if the Family perishes when the nation survives.

In representing the domestic relation, woman enters the Drama. The Family is her peculiar realm, while the State is the sphere of man's activity. The beauty in the character of the one and the greatness in the character of the other are always to be traced back to their respective institutions; this is, indeed, the ultimate basis of all characterization. But the State and the Family may collide; then we behold, if portrayed in its purity, the most powerful and the most tragic of all collisions — the collision between the principle of man and the principle of woman. Both are right, both are wrong, both must suffer. The solution, however, cannot be withheld — the woman has to be sacrificed; her institution is the lower and must be subordinated, though the full penalty of her sacrifice is burnt into the very flesh of the man.

But this conflict and immolation of the Family takes a peculiar form in the modern European State. The wife of the King is Queen; the mother of the household may be the ruler of the

people. The Family is thereby changed in its fundamental nature. The woman is reduced to being a political instrument — her children follow her condition; that is, the State absorbs the domestic relation. Hence the Queen-mother, a compound word which expresses this double character, becomes an important and peculiar element in the history of European nations. Her fate is to be harassed by the struggle between maternal instinct and political necessity — to have her emotional nature sacrificed to some national object. When different members of the same house seek control, the Family is broken up; its union around the mother is lost, and she is often forced to take part against her own kindred. The unmarried princess has in store a destiny equally tragic. Political advantage determines her marriage; the essential element of domestic happiness — mutual love of man and woman — is disregarded; the emotional basis of a true union is often wanting. Again it is the sacrifice of the Family to the State.

Undoubtedly the male members of the royal house are compelled to succumb to the same custom, and have to suffer, but it is the women who are most deeply aggrieved, for their institution is made to yield. The penalty follows hard after; infidelity is the universal trait of kings, and also it would seem not to be wanting in queens sometimes. Jealousy cannot be absent

from such a union. The kingly hearth is a domestic curse. Thus it will be seen that the royal woman — whether she be mother, wife, or maiden — is inherently a tragic character, who has to stand in the eternal cross-fire between domestic love and political duty or ambition.

Still, let us recognize the rational object of royal intermarriage. It has been said previously that the modern European system of States partakes of the nature of a family, and is often called the family of nations. To link its members together in peace and domestic affection, the different sovereigns seek to form matrimonial alliances between their children. Thus it is attempted to transfer the ties of the Family into the State, and to create a domestic bond between the nations of Europe. In this manner war is often averted, quarrels are healed, and, above all, the country is strengthened in its independence by powerful connections. The fact specially to be noted, therefore, is that the supreme world-historical principle of modern times, namely, the principle of nationality, has seized upon the Family as a mighty instrument of its realization. But the tragic element remains, notwithstanding; woman is sacrificed — man meets with retribution.

The third principle with which the modern State shows a conflict is the Church. It was the policy of the Holy See to bring together the

nations of Europe under one Supreme head. Rome wished to be the mother of this large and interesting family of peoples. She apparently inherited the principle of unification from the Roman Empire, but her means was now a spiritual power, though physical force was standing prepared in the background. A sort of universal republic floated in the imagination of her illustrious Pontiffs; the common bond of union was religion. Thus arose the great conflict between the Occident and the Orient, whose grand historical manifestation was the Crusades. This was the external struggle of Europe during the Middle Ages; it was the deadly combat between two religions — Christianity and Mohammedanism. This crusading spirit is not omitted by Shakespeare, though it does not give the foundation to any play.

But the internal conflict of the European State with the Church is of far greater significance. Civil authority was continually rasping against ecclesiastical domination, which was everywhere skillfully organized. The Church had made itself, in the strongest sense of the term, an institution, and in many cases it both enacted and administered the law. One or the other — State or Church — must be superfluous, and the world-historical question was: Shall the nation again be swallowed up in an universal Roman Empire? The spirit of modern times could give only one

solution — the State felt, and ultimately asserted, its supremacy, though its conflict with the Church was a perennial source of strife till it culminated in the great schism known as the Reformation. For the political significance of Protestantism was the subordination of Church to State, while the political significance of Catholicism was the subordination of State to Church. It is again the spirit of nationality, which is wrestling with a new enemy.

Nor can the effect of this pursuit of political objects upon the Church itself be omitted by the Poet. It lost its great end, for it subjected its religious purpose to secular aggrandizement. It was thus no longer truly a Church; it was a political organization — an Empire which sought supreme authority. It had, therefore, come to contradict its own principle of existence. But the spiritual effect, which should be the chief care of religion, was unfortunate. Its great men were trained to a diplomatic cunning; its moralists, too, often indulged in a subtle casuistry which confused and debauched the honest instincts of the people; learning and speculation, which it fostered, were not seldom prostituted to defend hypocrisy and falsehood for the sake of some political advantage — that is, the truest and highest content of religion was sacrificed to the ecclesiastical organization. Hence came the double revolt against its domination — from the moral conscience of

the individual and from the political principle of the State.

The English Historical Drama will necessarily exhibit this conflict in all its phases, as well as the final triumph of nationality, of which England is the most worthy representative among modern peoples. The external struggle of Christian Europe with Mohammedanism frequently looms up in the background — particularly in *Henry the Fourth* — and the King, as the son of the Church, is deliberating about some expedition to the Holy Land. Still, the internal conflict is enough to occupy his attention; he is the ruler of the State in a far higher sense than he is the son of the Church. The result of the struggle, as indicated in this Historical series, will be that the English people will change its religion and withdraw from the Catholic Republic, a result springing directly from the spirit of nationality.

The fourth conflict is that of the individual State with the world-historical principle, which is the essential ground of its existence. In such a case the State falls into contradiction with its higher self, and bitter is the penalty of the error. It has already been said that nationality, in its universal sense, is the political spirit of the modern world; that Europe is a family of nations, whose ideal aim is to live together in independence, yet in harmony. Each country, therefore, must acknowledge the right of other countries to be as

valid as its own, and must aid in vindicating that right in case it should be assailed. Now comes the essential insight — it is that a nation, in attempting to subjugate a nation, is destroying the principle of nationality, and thus falling into conflict with the world-historical movement of the modern age, and undermining the very foundation of its own existence. The collision lies between the State individual and the State universal — between national selfishness and national principle. Herein England has been guilty of violation; she has sought foreign conquest, which, as contradictory of her own highest end, has brought forth internal dissension and ruin. The Poet was probably not conscious of this struggle when he treated it, but it exists in History all the same, and is the moving principle in the transition from the Lancastrian to the Yorkian Tetralogy.

Such are the four inherent conflicts of the State — with Morality, with the Family, with the Church, and, finally, with itself. These conflicts are the nerve of every dramatic action; they form the most abiding and the most worthy themes of human interest; they involve every man and every people in their meshes. They have many gradations, which will be more fully detailed when the particular dramas come up for treatment. In these conflicts, too, must be sought the ultimate ground of character, for the dramatic individual

is the bearer of a principle which he must carry into execution against the opposing principle of other individuals.

IV. MORE DETAILED VIEW OF THIS LAST COLLISION. — We have arrived at the supreme political conflict, which, in its most general form, may be expressed as the conflict of the State with itself. This is the peculiar field of Shakespeare's Historical Drama, though other collisions play into the action. Here the Poet shows his wonderful political sense; quite equal it is to his poetic genius. Here also appears that higher principle which changes, and even destroys, nations; for one of the conflicting sides may represent something greater than the existing national principle, with which, indeed, it may happen to come into collision.

This conflict of the State with itself has two very different manifestations, which should be carefully distinguished in thought. The first is the external collision — one nation against another nation. A State is thus in conflict with a State — that is, with its own essential form, with itself. Such is the contradiction involved in all wars. Whether or not it is possible to avoid war by any political contrivances is a subject which does not belong here; it is sufficient to say that all attempts of the kind have been hitherto unsuccessful. The conflict comes — a people and a civilization pass away forever. This conflict lies in the very

limitation of one State against another State; each seeks — and, indeed, must seek — to assert its own individual existence and its own national principle. Finally, the supreme struggle is brought on, in which one of the nations often sinks out of the ken of History.

But the victorious nation, after the lapse of its allotted period, meets with the same fate — it is conquered and disappears. The same mighty principle which destroyed its enemy now destroys it; so the series continues, or has continued in the past. But what shall we call this principle which thus uses the nations as its instruments? Its reality will not be doubted; it is clearly the highest, strongest principle of History. Let us name it the world-historical principle, or even the World-Spirit. It calls a nation into existence to execute its behests; this is, then, a world-historical nation. In looking at the past we observe that in antiquity the empires of the Orient, Greece, Rome, were world-historical nations at successive periods. But the main interest for us is the collision which thence arises. A nation armed with this principle goes forth to subdue other nations and subordinate them to the same influence. The result is a struggle between the world-historical principle and the State, which gives the highest possible collision, but, at the same time, springing deeply from the popular feeling and the popu-

lar consciousness. Its plainest manifestation is seen in *Julius Cæsar*.

A second phase of the external collisions of the State can hardly be elevated to the dignity of the preceding. It is when wars are entered upon from national or monarchical caprice, or from some trifling and temporary interest. Thus we have State against State simply. Still, even in the most trivial conflicts some faint reflection of the World-Spirit may be often traced. In the petty struggles of non-historical people and tribes, like those of America, Asia, and Africa, there can be, however, but little significance.

But it must not be thought that this world-historical principle is some external power outside of the people themselves. It is, in fact, their own inner development—their deepest consciousness. The nation which perishes, perishes through itself; so the nation which conquers, conquers through itself. When one people makes a higher synthesis than its neighbors, in its institutions and in its thought, that people is certain to be victorious in the end. It has so happened in the past that nationality has not been able to change fundamentally its principle, and pass to the higher one; each nation has seemed capable of realizing only one world-historical thought. When the hour strikes, a whole people becomes tragic and dies in the defense of national existence, and another nation takes its place. Such

are the two leading phases of the external collision of the State.

We next pass to consider the internal collision, which is always more direct and of greater interest to the citizen, as well as more continuous in its effect. Now the State is divided within itself — separates into opposing elements — and at once we behold the phenomenon of *Political Parties*. These are essentially two, but with many shades of difference within themselves. It is a fact which has always excited surprise and investigation. All States — in particular, all free States — have this diremption in their very nature, though it is sometimes foolishly regretted. But the primal foundation of the political party goes back to the State itself; nay, lies in the very constitution of the human mind. Some men hold on to institutions, to customs — in general, to all the realized forms of intelligence; in their permanence and unchangeableness alone public safety and public happiness are supposed to lie. This view, though absolutely true in its proper limitations, becomes in its extreme one-sidedness destructive of all progress; the human mind is cramped in the trammels of a rigid formalism, and freedom of every kind is annihilated. The protest of the outraged spirit of man produces a new party, which, in its excess, seeks to destroy, or to be forever changing, the established institutions of the State. In the modern political

world these two parties are known as Conservative and Radical; it is their action and counter-action which on the one hand secures to institutions permanence, and on the other hand prevents them from becoming fetters to body and soul.

Class or caste, in antiquity, was the dividing line of party, and the same is true at the present time, though to a different extent among different peoples. The Patrician was by birth a Conservative, for he wished to retain the ancient privileges of his order, while the Plebeian was by birth a Radical, for he wished to acquire new rights. To employ another form of expression, the one side represented the objective — the permanent; the other side represented the subjective — the changeable. Both are not only necessary to the State, but belong to every complete individual mind.

The particular issue upon which the parties divide is very different in different countries, and in the same country at different times. It may be division of the land, right of suffrage, paper money, etc. But each issue reflects the general spirit of the whole, and each party therein adumbrates its universal character. In reference to the Historical Drama, this particular side must be presented in its full sensuous completeness.

This conflict of parties is a perennial one, and ought to be, for from it comes all political vitality, all true development. But it leads to guilt, and, hence, becomes tragic when it seduces the indi-

vidual into placing his party above his country. The great example of such a deed and its consequences is witnessed in *Coriolanus*. Both parties must be subordinate to the State — must have their end and design in its well-being. Hence at this point arises the possibility of a collision of political principles, the one of which is embodied in a partisan organization and the other in the State. Such is, perhaps, the tendency of all political parties; it is their belief and their constant instruction: our side must prevail, else the country is ruined. But it may truly be said, if such be really the case, then the country is already ruined. When the government cannot be trusted to either of the great political organizations without fear of its destruction, the nation is already on the point of dissolution; the very statement is a declaration to that effect. But the assertion is seldom true, though each party inculcates it as a fundamental dogma of its existence that “we possess all the patriotism and all the true political principles, while our opponents are the enemies of their country.” Such is the main internal collision of the State, wherein party assails country; the solution is that the individual who introduces this conflict and persists in it is banished or perishes.

But the world-historical principle may work also through the party as we saw it before working through the State. In such case the result is

the destruction of the nation from within, or at least a fundamental change in its constitution. For the World-Spirit feeds upon nations; it is the foe of nationality. Hence the world-historical individual appears as the destroyer of his country — of the constitution and the laws. But, in reality, he only carries out what has already been developed in the consciousness of the people.

All social innovations, when they become of national importance, assume the form of a political party. This is, therefore, the means by which the spirit of man rises into institutions — objectifies itself in more perfect forms. A persistent agitation of some social question finally produces a party out of a clique, which then may become the dominant party, and rule the country and make the laws in accordance with its principle. Some class, as the laborers or the property-holders, may succeed in elevating itself into a party, if its claims become a truly national question. Thus every social revolution takes the shape of a political party, and may, therefore, be made one of the elements of an internal collision of the State.

If we now take a glance back and recapitulate what has been elaborated, we find that there are essentially two main collisions of the State with itself — the external and the internal. The former is one individual State against another individual State, either of which may be the

bearer of a world-historical principle, or of some finite national end. The latter — that is, the internal conflict — is the Political Party against the State; here, too, a world-historical element may be involved, or some merely partisan or individual object. These phases would seem to comprehend the totality of the relations of the State from this point of view. The Family, too, exists in this play of colliding powers, and may itself fall into conflict with any one or all of them. Thus the poet has an ample store from which he can select to diversify his treatment.

V. STRUCTURE. — As regards Dramatic Structure, its two leading elements — Threads and Movements — will remain in the Historical Drama, essentially the same as already unfolded in the General Introduction. (See Commentary on the Tragedies, page XLIX.) There are two movements in the main, showing the double phase of some high career, usually a rise and fall, or a culmination of some kind of fortune or misfortune. The Threads, or the organic lines which run lengthwise through the play, are usually more distinctly marked than the Movements, inasmuch as the very idea of conflict implies them. The two States engaged in external struggle, the two Parties engaged in internal struggle, fall naturally into a representation through two opposing Groups or Threads. As the Historical Drama is essentially political, and thus portrays

a political conflict of some kind, both sides have to be shown in their separate organization and development. Also, beside the political Thread, which is necessarily the main one, there may be a Domestic or a Comic Thread (Sir John Falstaff), which must, however, be in an inner harmony with the leading historical theme.

There is no doubt that the organism of the Historical Dramas is looser than that of the Tragedies and Comedies. This is what we might expect; History cannot bend so easily to the poetic form; it has its own law, which is not always that of the Drama. The facts will sometimes go their own way in spite of the call to artistic unity. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, and still more in *Henry V.*, not to speak of some of the less important historical plays, there is a tendency of the drama to turn panorama—to change from inner development to outer spectacle.

Still we shall always be able to see outlines of dramatic structure, though they be faint, else the work were no drama. We shall still find those ultimate elements of dramatic form—Threads and Movements—though the organism gets to be of the lowest. Upon these organic lines the exposition must continue to move in order to be organic itself. Something more than giving the idea of the play, something more than unfolding the character is necessary; we must behold the structure of the drama, in which all the various

limbs come together and form one body having life. In the drama, too, the spiritual and corporeal principles go together. Idea without structure is breath without body — namely, wind; structure without idea is body without breath — namely a dead thing which in process of time may become malodorous.

VI. CLASSIFICATION OF THE HISTORICAL DRAMA.

This must follow the order of History, which is chronological. Each play is cut off at both ends, so to speak; it is taken out of an uninterrupted stream of events — of actual facts. That which goes before and that which comes after also demand to be recognized — hence the tendency in the historical sphere to a series of dramas. The division into Tragedy and Comedy cannot be applied here with as much propriety as to the single plays. Each of the histories usually shows both success and failure — the happy victory of one party, the tragic end of the other. Hence, in the historical plays taken singly, there is as a general rule no complete Mediation, as well as no complete Tragedy. Both elements are present, and usually they are not fully blended into harmony.

But, when these separate plays are joined together in their proper groups, then the previous divisions of Tragedy and Comedy (or Mediated Drama) begin to rise up to view again. For instance, the Yorkian Tetralogy is inherently

tragic — it ends in the destruction of both the colliding Houses. On the other hand, the Lancastrian Tetralogy is mediated — the termination of the long and intense political struggle is happy. The same may be reasonably said of the group of two Roman Historical plays, *Julius Cæsar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* — the end is universal peace, along with the triumph of the imperial principle, although many illustrious heroes have fallen in the conflict.

If we rise now to still higher generalization, and grasp the separate character of the two great historical series — the Roman and the English — in their fundamental distinction, the same thought will come up in the mind; for the Roman Historical series, ending with *Titus Andronicus*, is tragic, just as the Roman world itself was tragic, and passed away in a conflict with the surrounding Barbarians. As its history, so its poem. On the contrary, the English Historical series, taken as a whole, is a Mediated Drama, in which the end is happy. The conflicts of the State within and without are reconciled — the outcome is a nation free from all external control. This is truly the triumph of nationality, of which England is the representative.

Finally, if we bring together the two great series into one thought, we find that they constitute a mighty World-Drama, with a tragic conflict for the nation in Rome, which conflict, how-

ever, is mediated for the nation in England. Verily, the ancient world was tragic — was the true home and origin of Tragedy; Fate, with drawn sword, ready to smite, was forever hovering over it there in its Heaven. But the modern world, based upon its Christianity, means the reconciliation of man with himself and with his God; Love, not Terror, is its principle; Fate turns its sword upon itself. Hence the true instinct of the Poet of the modern age has made his World-Drama a mediated one, passing through deep and dark struggles to a happy end.

The play forming the transition from the Legendary Part is *Troilus and Cressida*, which, though founded on a legend, has such a decided preponderance of the political element in its composition that it may be ranked as an historical play. The following table will present to the eye a summary of the classification: —

Transition to the Historical Drama.		<i>Troilus and Cressida.</i>
ROMAN SERIES. (TRAGIC.)	{ Prologue.	<i>Coriolanus.</i>
	{ From Republic to Empire — Mediated.	{ <i>Julius Cæsar.</i> <i>Antony and Cleopatra.</i>
	{ Epilogue.	<i>Titus Andronicus.</i>
ENGLISH SERIES. (MEDIATED.)	{ Prologue.	<i>King John.</i>
	{ Lancastrian Tetralogy — Mediated.	{ <i>Richard II.</i> <i>Henry IV.</i> — (Two parts.) <i>Henry V.</i>
		{ <i>Henry VI.</i> — (Three parts.) <i>Richard III.</i>
	{ Yorkian Tetralogy — Tragic.	<i>Henry VIII.</i>
	{ Epilogue.	
HISTORICAL D R A M A. PART II.		

The method of classification, which most critics seem to prefer in these days, is the biographical and not the historical. The effort is to find out just when the poet wrote a given play, as if that could bring us very far on our Shakespearian journey. He certainly did not write these Histories in chronological order, hence comes the suggestion that we must study them as they were written. He composed *Henry VI.* long before he did *Henry V.*, and *Julius Cæsar* before *Coriolanus*. Undoubtedly we should look at these plays in the order of their origin; it shows the man Shakespeare in his varied historic congenialities, how one period takes hold of the youth of genius, another the middle-age, another the old-age. It indicates how the poet came to Rome after England, to universal history after national history, to the World-Spirit after the State.

But these historical pieces, notwithstanding, form one work, one poem, on which Shakespeare wrote through his whole life, beginning it with one of his first and ending it with one of his last plays. He returned to this long poem in various moods, at various stages of experience, and worked in the middle of it outwards toward both ends. *Coriolanus* and *Henry VIII.* quite touch each other in time of composition, but they are the extremes in the order of history. Which is the better way of looking at them — their place in

the poet's life, or their place in the life of the world? Take the *Faust* of Goethe, who wrote on his great poem for sixty years, composing its scenes not at all in succession, but here and there according to mood and instinct. It is known that portions of the Second Part are earlier than portions of the First Part; but shall we not therefore read *Faust* in succession as the poet has left it to us? Certain German critics have indeed dismembered it and spread it out in fragments, but who cares about following them to the dissecting room, unless to dissect the dissectors?

There is nothing to hinder this method of dislocation from being applied to single plays. For example, *Hamlet* was not all written at once; the poet probably worked at it off and on for fifteen years, from 1589, when the first mention of a Hamlet drama occurs, to 1604 when the Second Quarto appeared. Why not cut up *Hamlet* and put each fragment under its proper date, according to the supposed time of composition? Then cut up the other dramas, and place the various bits of the same period alongside of one another in a row. Some future member of the newer Shakespeare Society will yet slash the single plays to pieces, following his freshly discovered tests, and thus make a new Shakespeare with gobbets of the old one strewn all over the twenty-five years of poetical activity, each fragment

being duly placed under the given year, or perchance, the given hour of its issuing from the goose-quill. Then the poet will certainly be dead, and his biography can be written.

But even at that happy period some people will still feel that they are nearer to the view of the poet himself if they follow the suggestion of the First Folio, which arranges the English Historical Dramas according to their historical sequence, and actually dares to place *Henry VI.* after *Henry V.*

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

This drama is of interest to the Shakespearian student for two main reasons: it contains, first, the poet's most direct and philosophical statement of his Ethical World, that is, of what underlies his poetry; it shows, secondly, the relation between two universal poets — the supreme modern genius looking back at and transforming the supreme ancient genius. It is not fundamentally a parody or travesty, as some writers contend; on the contrary it is a serious work, with humorous, satirical, and even mock-heroic lightning playing around it pretty much everywhere. But the heart of the work speaks in dead earnest.

The frame-work of this drama is the Trojan war. It has nearly the same limits as the Iliad; it presupposes the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon, which causes the withdrawal of Achilles till the death of his friend, Patroclus, when he again goes into battle and slays Hector. Many Homeric incidents and motives are retained, while many are introduced which would have made the old Greek bard stare with wonder. * The famous heroes of the Iliad are brought before us, but we can hardly recognize them in their modern shape; the beau-

tiful plastic outline is not lost, but is subordinated to the inner element of character. The statue is transformed to flesh and blood. Shakespeare has taken these antique ideal forms and poured into them the subjective intensity of the modern world. This is the greatest and most enduring ground of interest in the present drama. The old Greek hero is now moved, not by the god from without, but by himself from within — the divine influence is transmuted into his own intelligence. Ulysses, the favorite of Minerva, no longer meets the goddess upon the highways and addresses her in familiar accents, but communes with his own spirit, and from this communing proceeds to action. In other words, the ancient Epic has changed into the modern Drama. When the meaning is the same both in Homer and in Shakespeare, how different is the form! Yet it must not be forgotten that the outside is Greek, though the inside be Anglo-Saxon; the Hellenic mould is always visible, though it be not the sole, nor even the most prominent, object of interest.

The contrast is certainly striking, and is often so incongruous as to convey the notion of a humorous purpose. In the mouths of these old Homeric personages the Poet has placed the most abstract statement of what may be called his philosophy that is to be found in any of his works. His views of society, of life, of institutions, are here expressed in a language as direct

and definite as that employed by the thinker trained to the use of the abstruse terms of the schools. What these principles are, and their influence upon his literary activity, have already been often touched upon in the course of the present work. The reflections are mainly political, but are sometimes psychological, and show a mind most subtly scrutinizing its own processes. Those who hold that Shakespeare was the supremely unconscious poet would do well to study this play till they understand it — if, indeed, it can be fully understood without some philosophical culture and knowledge.

It would give a new glance into the thought-life of the author, if we should put together and compare the expressions in this play which may be called philosophical rather than poetical. The relation of the finite to the infinite, the grand problem of philosophy, is hinted in this: —

* * * Will you with counters sum
The past-proportion of his infinite?

The last word here suggests the remark that abstract adjectives are with uncommon frequency used as substantives in the present play, which, for this and other reasons, seems to be strangely tinged with Germanism. Ulysses and Hector in their reasonings are purely philosophical, though they decorate their abstractions with many a poetic figure. Moreover, they are quite alike in

their philosophy; both argue against "the particular will" as opposed to "the general." Achilles in the Greek camp is "in will peculiar," and is "without observance or respect of any;" through his pride he refuses to "communicate his parts to others." Troilus in the Trojan camp will not listen to "reason," but is led on "by the conduct of my will," though his brother Hector tells him "value dwells not in particular will," but

holds his estimate and dignity
As well wherein 'tis precious of itself
As in the prizer.

That is, value is not merely a subjective matter, "in the prizer," but also in the thing prized. Ulysses in his argument seizes the "Iliad" in its very core; he shows that the individual must subserve the universal order and purpose, or else be reduced to nothing. This is the fundamental point in the modern drama as well as in the ancient epic; it is here that Homer and Shakespeare become one and reveal a common harmony. The whole course of the "Iliad" is the discipline of the refractory individual; the philosophy of this discipline is put by Shakespeare into the mouth of Ulysses. It may be fairly said, that Ulysses, for this reason, is the hero, the intellectual hero of the present play. The English poet shakes hands with Homer across the ages, and with him enforces the deep ethical pur-

port of the Trojan legend, but dethrones Achilles, the man of brawn, and sets up in his stead Ulysses, the man of brain, who is, however, the ancient hero of the *Odyssey*, Homer's second poem.

The argument of Hector, who is the Trojan counterpart of Ulysses, is likewise ethico-philosophical and favors the restoration of Helen, against the passion of Troilus and Paris. Hector moralizes upon the deed of Paris, then philosophises upon morality. He even goes so far as to cite Aristotle, the great moral philosopher — a subtle anachronism, valid for Shakespeare, if not Hector. Paris and Troilus are not

Unlike young men whom Aristotle thought
Unfit to hear moral philosophy —

because of “the hot passion of distempered blood” and because of their seeking “pleasure and revenge” rather than “a free determination twixt right and wrong.” But this is not the end of Hector's learned citations on the subject; he refers both to natural law and to statutory law, like a publicist of the seventeenth century, for the case of Helen; and declares

these moral laws
Of Nature and of Nations speak aloud
To have her back returned.

Thus in the Greek and in the Trojan camps Ulysses and Hector unite in enforcing the moral

law against "the particular will," which in the one case shows itself in the pride of Achilles, causing him to withdraw from the national conflict, and which, in the other case, shows itself in the passion of Paris and Troilus, causing them to keep Helen.

But Hector in the end abandons his high moral stand and sides with the opposite party for the sake of glory. That decision is his tragic doom; he fights for what he knows and has declared to be wrong; he violates his deepest conviction. Such is also his character and fate in Homer, from whom Shakespeare doubtless drew the outlines of Hector. Here the Trojan moralist differs from the Greek moralist Ulysses, who does not drop back into the opposite of his own principle, but remains the intellectual hero. We also see that Shakespeare did not favor the Trojans more than Homer did, or perchance than Zeus did.

But the strangest and most incongruous element which is foisted into this old Homeric company is the manners of chivalry. It amounts to downright burlesque, and such, beyond any doubt, it was intended to be by the Author. The best passage for illustrating this phase of the drama is the challenge borne by Æneas from Hector. All the heroes seem to be transformed into mediæval knights, each one of whom is ready to prove the supreme beauty of his mistress by

ordeal of battle. The climax of humor is attained when the aged Nestor, who has lived three generations of men, comes forward and offers to demonstrate to Hector by proof of arms "that my lady was fairer than his grandam." The principles of honor, valor, love, hospitality, with which these personages are endowed, give to the whole action the pleasing aroma of the Middle Ages. The reflective element before mentioned, which was injected into the characters of the old heroes, is serious rather than humorous, but the chivalrous element is purely humorous, and turns them all into Don Quixotes. With Shakespeare the age or chivalry is past, and it is with him an object of ridicule as much as with Cervantes. The hoary shapes of antiquity he thus places in a modern institution, which, however, was already worn out in his own time and laughed at by the whole world.

Such is the Homeric group which is introduced into the present drama; but there is also another set of persons here, whose principle and whose actions are unknown to the *Iliad*. Love is with them the main business — not war. The legend of Troilus, Cressida, and Pandarus is the creation of the later romancers, which was grafted on the old story of Troy. It portrays the struggle of the tender passion in one of its phases — the fidelity of man and the falsity of woman. The burning intensity, the fierce conflicts, the supreme power of love, find their expression in this part

of the fable, which is, indeed, a later development of human spirit. Still, the relation between the two groups must be traced; the Trojan war was caused by the faithlessness of a woman whose restoration is demanded by the Nation; the refusal calls out the heroes who are seeking to bring her back by force. Female infidelity is the theme; in the one case it involves the Family merely, but in the other case it involves the State. Helen and Cressida, therefore, resemble each other; both perform the same deed, though in different relations; both deceive faithful men, and are captivated by faithless men. In the Trojan and in the Greek world we find the parallelism of love true and false; Troilus, Cressida, Diomed form a trio corresponding to Menelaus, Helen, Paris—the center of both sets being the woman untrue. This is the shadow which darkens the whole drama.

Such are the two threads running through the play. They may be named, according to their leading tendency, the love-thread and the war-thread; though parallel in action, in thought the first is the source of the second. The movements also are two, the division being manifest, not only by a difference in principle, but also by a difference in merit. The first movement, in general, passes from strife and separation to unity. The parted lovers are brought together by the mediation of Pandarus, and are made happy by mutual vows of devotion. In Troy the division of opinion

which previously existed is healed ; in the Greek host the angry Achilles is wrought upon by the cunning of Ulysses, and seems to resolve to take part again in the war ; thus the hostile armies come to internal harmony preparatory to the external struggle. The second movement portrays the passage from union to disruption and conflict. The lovers, on the one hand, are torn asunder by an unforeseen occurrence ; Cressida proves faithless, and thus the bond of emotion is broken. The combat, on the other hand, arises between the two hostile forces ; after many fluctuations, Hector, the Trojan hero, is slain, and his countrymen cease from their attack and retire to the city ; things are left as they were before. The negative termination of the play is striking ; Troilus and Cressida are separated, and the foes still confront each other with warlike preparation.

I.

There is no doubt that the first movement, embracing the first three acts, is the most positive, the most organic and the most poetical part of the play. The study of it, therefore, is the study of the Shakespearian conception in all its depth and fullness. Each thread can easily be followed out in order.

1. Taking up the love-thread and following it through the first movement, we observe that the divine passion has been already excited in the

bosoms of the lovers, and moves on speedily to its fruition in the betrothal. Troilus is first introduced to us. He is still young and impulsive; he is completely swayed by his strong and intense emotions. He has met the fair Cressida, though the circumstances are not told; at once we see him literally consumed with the sacred flame. She dances before his mind continually; sighs burst forth unbidden from his heart; every duty or purpose is swallowed up in the whirlpool of his passion. Such is the lover, pure and simple — the Romeo of the world. But Troilus has another trait, which gives him dignity and elevation of character, and which stands in the most direct opposition to his absorption in his feelings. He is a man of action — a warrior second only, if not equal, to Hector, and a patriotic defender of his country. But these two elements of his nature are now in deadly struggle; in his own breast is the conflict between Love and War. Honor and ambition call him to the field, where the destiny of Fatherland is being decided. But passion has seized him in its firmest grasp; its supremacy is declared in the very first line of the play, where, after arming himself for battle, he calls out:—

“I'll unarm again:

Why should I war without the walls of Troy,
That find such cruel battle here within? ”

Such is the first triumph of Love over the bold warrior; it has tamed him till he is “weaker than

a woman's tear," which, notwithstanding the contemptuous expression of Troilus, is an instrument of considerable power. But now there is another combat which he has to wage — fierce, incessant, lachrymose. The favor of the fair Cressida seems very uncertain; her uncle cannot wind up the negotiation with sufficient speed. Troilus, therefore, feels in his heart that most painful of all pangs — the pang of unrequited love. Still, he has hope, though he is very impatient, and Pandarus keeps alive his imagination by recounting the charms of his beautiful mistress. At last the mediator brings about their meeting. Troilus is all fervor and passion; he makes the first declaration of devotion, which is followed by that of Cressida. Open, sincere, even unsophisticated, is the youthful suitor, the best model of the love-hero that Shakespeare has left us. His emotion is so pure, intense, and direct that its beauty has no flaw, while at the same time his character rises out of a mere emotional existence into the region of the noblest manly activity. It is true that love asserts its mastery for the time being, still it does not quench his zeal for his country. But now, as the conflict within him is soothed to repose by his union, Troilus will be himself again if jealous Fate will but refrain from interference. Such good behavior, however, can hardly be expected of it in a drama. Let the reader, with gloomy foreboding, await the outcome of the story a few pages ahead.

Pandarus has been just mentioned as the mediating power between the two lovers. His function is not very important, since both the man and the woman are touched with a mutual passion, which is sufficient to bring them together without any assistance. Pandarus is rather a busy-body ; active, yet harmless. He is certainly not a villain; the alliance which he seeks to bring about is worthy; his means can hardly be condemned by the rigid moralist, though his jokes are a little too free for the modern ear. Assuredly the odious word "pander," which is supposed to be derived from his name, cannot justly be applied to his conduct in this drama. Moreover, his understanding is not strong; the artful Cressida stands far above all his schemes and makes fun of him, though he is able to exercise a good deal of control over the ardent and simple-hearted Troilus. His name has brought upon him a legacy of abuse which his deed in no sense justifies. There is not an enterprising mother in the land who does not do as much without a breath of condemnation.

Cressida receives after Troilus a visit from the industrious match-maker, who tries to excite her love and admiration for the youthful hero in every manner possible. The name of Troilus is continually introduced into the conversation; his beauty, intellect, youth, are the themes of great praise, but it is his valor which is the main subject

of laudation. The famous heroes of Troy are made to pass in review one after another, a circumstance modeled after Homer; the noble Troilus is superior to them all—even Hector is no exception. But the adroit Cressida listens to the encomiums bestowed by her uncle with a complete penetration of their object, parrying his questions, tormenting him with a feigned opposition, uttering words of detraction against Troilus, indulging in a wild strain of banter and jest; in fine, she teases her dear uncle to desperation, and conceals from him completely her real feelings and purposes. He confesses that he cannot understand her, while she probes him to the bottom by her blunt words—“you are a bawd.” Her character comes out plain in this interview; she is shrewd, witty and wanton; no person of the caliber of Pandarus can touch the depths of her mind—the cool understanding effectually controls the emotions.

Such a woman is now to be seen in love, for she all the time has cherished a secret affection for Troilus. What will she turn out to be? Her admiration is genuine; in her monologue, in which she has no motive for concealment, she says that she sees in the actual Troilus a thousandfold more “than in the glass of Pandar’s praise may be.” But feeling must be suppressed; she, therefore, does just what might be expected—she refuses subordination to love.

Her argument is without the trace of passion, and is directed against passion :—

“ Things won are done ; joy’s soul lies in the doing —
Men prize the thing ungained more than it is —
Achievement is command ; ungained, beseech ;
Then, though my heart’s content firm love doth bear,
Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear.”

That is, consummation dampens ardor, suspense keeps it alive. Led by this specious reasoning, she intends to keep down the rising flame, and make the true love of her devoted suitor her sport and his instrument of torture. The emotion which she feels must be concealed, and converted to a means for some other end besides mutual union. She is the intellectual coquette.

The fundamental distinction between the characters of Troilus and Cressida is now apparent. The man resigns himself to his love ; many great interests are pressing him, but they are brushed aside—his sacrifice is complete. But the woman subordinates her love to her understanding—to her planning and schemes ; she refuses the absolute surrender to the feeling of Family. She, therefore, must be declared to be untrue to the deepest principle of her sex. Her falsity hereafter is adequately motivated by this single trait ; love—devotion to the one individual—is not the controlling impulse of her nature. But we must

advance to the next stage—the good offices of Pandarus bring about their meeting. It has already been noticed how Troilus, true to his character, makes an immediate and unreserved declaration of the most fervent devotion. But Cressida is also true to her character; she hesitates, suspects, makes abstract reflections of various kinds. When she does whisper her love she repents—reproaches herself with having “blabbed,” and is forever recalling what she has said. “Where is my wit?” she asks; for wit is her boast—to it she is always trying to subject her words and actions. There is no full, free resignation, but she is continually catching herself and her utterances, as if her thought had to go back and take a glance at itself. Her mind is her pride; she is really ashamed of her love. Cressida is best designated by calling her the opposite of that which Troilus describes himself to be:—

“I am as true as truth’s simplicity,
And simpler than the infancy of truth.”

For she is full of falsity and stratagem. Both take a vow of eternal fidelity, yet with a wonderful difference of manner, which is prophetic of their future separation.

To this love-thread must be added the appearance of Helen and Paris. They hardly belong to the action, and the pretext upon which they

are introduced is very slender. But thereby we are forced to cast a glance into the remote background of the war, and observe their relation to Troilus and Cressida. Their life is a sensual resignation to love; for its sake all ethical ties are disregarded, even nationality is jeopardized. But it is the god to whom absolute submission must be yielded; the song of Pandarus declares its almighty power as well as its pang. Paris is kept out of the fray by the spell of Helen, while all his guiltless brothers are fighting in the front rank of battle. So, too, Troilus disarms himself when his heart is subdued—the spirit of love is stronger than the spirit of war. Helen has already manifested the infidelity which Cressida will hereafter manifest; the husband, Menelaus, who seeks to recover his wife by force of arms, is not less devoted than Troilus, the lover. It is the story of women faithless and of men faithful; the ordinary romance is reversed, and Shakespeare's usual procedure is reversed. Thus the famous couple are dismissed; they will not be further employed by the Poet, who must not repeat his theme, and, hence, must pass to the consequences of that memorable elopement, namely, the siege of Troy. But we catch a glimpse of their world, its sweet dalliance and sensual indulgence; there is enthroned the queen of beauty whose might none can resist. Even Hector, it is declared — Hector, the true husband

and stern warrior — would yield to the blandishments of this mortal Venus: —

— “ Sweet Helen, I must woo you
To help unarm our Hector. His stubborn buckles,
With these your white, enchanting fingers touch’d,
Shall more obey than to the edge of steel,
Or force of Greekish sinews. You shall do more
Than all the island Kings — disarm great Hector.”

2. We now pass to the war-thread, the structure of which is somewhat complex, and, therefore, must be carefully analyzed. In the first place, there are two sides — the Trojan and the Grecian — which are arrayed against each other in war. But, in the second place, each side has two parties or factions, which are opposed to each other mainly, though not wholly, on questions of policy. These internal differences are now to be portrayed; the characters which maintain the conflicting opinions are to be grouped and designated; the means are to be shown whereby each side arrives at a substantial harmony within itself. Such is the first movement — from separation to union.

(*a.*) The siege has lasted seven years, and still the walls of Troy are standing. The Grecian princes have lost hope, and seem ready to abandon the enterprise. Failure has to be acknowledged; there can be no longer any disguise. It is a situation of despair; a great national undertaking must be given up, whose abandonment comes next to the loss of civil freedom. This is

the trying political situation. What is its cause, and what is its cure? The heroes have to address themselves to the dangerous condition of affairs; their various characters will be manifested according to their conduct in the present emergency; it is a time which tries men's souls.

The first speaker is Agamemnon, commander-in-chief. He utters the word of hope. It is true that their plans have hitherto failed, but such is the course of all great enterprises; something always arises to obstruct them — the realization never equals the thought. "Persistive constancy" is the supreme test of manhood; let us not give way to adverse fortune. The language of Agamemnon is full of dignity and encouragement; in him center the aspirations of the Greek army — he represents its desire, its purpose, its endurance, but not its intelligence. He does not speak of the cause of the ill-success of the war, nor of the remedy for the present evils; he can attribute them only to the caprice of fortune — a solution which always indicates blindness. Empty hope, perseverance without reason, good intention without power, he possesses in a high degree; as leader, he is hardly more than a respectable figure-head. But it must not be thought that he is out of place. He brings to his office rank, character, experience, and personal dignity, which, perhaps, could not be found so happily blended in any other chieftain; the brain, however, must

be supplied from a different source. Thus Agamemnon, notwithstanding his high position, seems a puppet to a certain extent, for he does not furnish the ultimate moving principle. Such, too, is essentially his place and character in Homer.

Next comes Nestor, “the old man eloquent,” who echoes the sentiments of the commander, and enforces them by new arguments and illustrations. In him the orator appears; he adorns his speech with the graces of diction, employing a great profusion of figures and speaking in a vein of strong enthusiasm. The distinction in their styles of address is plainly indicated by Ulysses: The words of Nestor are beautifully ornamented, “hatched in silver,” while those of Agamemnon are more strong and homely, and should be held up “high in brass.” But the character of the old hero is the interesting point. Nestor is not the man who creates, but is the man who appreciates and gives utterance to the thought of others. The new plan is laid before him; his opinion is decisive. Too old for invention, his powers have increased in judgment with age; none of the passions of youth or the jealousies of leadership obscure his vision; his mind grasps the thing as it is, without the least taint of prejudice. But the thought must first be brought before him — he cannot originate it; the choice of what is best is his strength. Appre-

ciation and expression are the salient points of the white-haired sage of the Greeks.

Now, to complete the triad of characters, we must have the originator—the man of creative intelligence. Here he appears, and is on the point of speaking. Ulysses—for such is his name—is the supreme personage of the drama; the proportions of his intellect are truly colossal. He understands the difficulty at once, and sees the remedy. Above all human beings, he possesses insight and invention; he clearly comprehends the causes of the existing evils and knows their cure. He will not be content to utter innocent platitudes—that fortune is fickle, that men must be patient, that reverses show the true worth of the warrior. Failure has overtaken the expedition; there is some good reason for it, and he intends to go to the bottom of the matter. The disease, however deep-seated, must be discovered, and then the medicine can be applied. Such a discussion will lead Ulysses to examine the whole organization of the Greeks before Troy, and his argument will draw in the general principles of all social institutions, and even of individual conduct.

Such is the representative group of the one party in the Grecian army; it is the positive, patriotic party, which believes in prosecuting the war to a glorious termination. This element is common to the three, but the fine gradation in

their characterization should be distinctly noticed. Agamemnon is the embodiment of all the lofty impulses of the grand national enterprise, and, hence, is truly the leader of the people; but his limitations are his feelings — faith, hope, perseverance, good intention, cannot take the place of knowledge. Nestor rises higher; he has appreciative intelligence united with the golden gift of persuasion. He first repeats the somewhat empty exhortations of Agamemnon, but, when the deeper nature of Ulysses opens its treasures for his judgment, he yields an unhesitating assent. The apex is, of course, occupied by Ulysses, whose crowning gift is, as before said, creative intelligence.

Let us now listen to what such a man has to say about the nature of the existing evils and their remedy, for certainly his words will be worthy of attention. “The specialty of rule hath been neglected” — the individual has not performed the particular function allotted to him; there has been no subordination — and, hence, no organization — in the Grecian army. To illustrate his principle, Ulysses goes through the physical and intellectual universe; the same law of harmony prevails everywhere. The planetary system, with its central power, “Sol, in noble eminence enthroned and sphered,” is a striking example, which is here elaborated in great detail. But it is the social fabric — the institutions of man — in

which the necessity of degree, of subordination, is most plainly manifested. Without it the whole realized world of right would crumble to ruin; there would be no security for the weak, no respect for age or consanguinity; Astræa would again take her flight to the skies: —

“Strength should be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son should strike his father dead;
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong —
Between whose endless jar justice resides —
Should lose their names, and so should justice, too.”

Ulysses sees plainly that subordination is the primal law of institutional life; each person must fill his place in the community and must freely submit to what is above himself. But why not let institutions perish? Then man perishes. The individual is reduced to the wild beast of nature, with all its voracity; he will at once proceed to devour his own species. This ultimate reduction is also stated in all its force and abstractness by the old Greek thinker, or, rather, by Shakespeare: —

“Then everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite, an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce an universal prey,
And last eat up itself.”

Such is the logical outcome of “this neglect of degree;” it is the destruction of insti-

tutions, and the destruction of institutions is the destruction of man. The result springs from the most severe dialectical process: The individual is resolved into appetite, and appetite, being universalized, must consume all, which includes itself. No words could more distinctly prove that the Poet was in the habit of *thinking*, in the true sense of the term — that is, of testing every principle by the form of universality. If this were written by a poet of to-day, it would be laughed at by many a critic as a specimen of pure German transcendentalism. That the inference before mentioned is not far-fetched, note again the language with care. Man becomes mere appetite, which is an *universal* wolf; this wolf must, of necessity, make an *universal* prey, till it finally comes back to itself, and at last *eats up itself*. With what absolute precision is the negative result drawn; with what remorseless rigor is the whole philosophy of sensualism burnt to ashes in two or three short sentences! And must the confession be made? Bemerciful, oh ye gods; the statement has the very manner — or, if you please, the very knack — of the Hegelian Dialectic, the most terrible of all metaphysical goblins. Having said this, let us pray, now or never — “Angels and ministers of grace, defend us.”

There is such a determination on the part of many writers to reduce the greatest and wisest of poets to the same dimensions as themselves, that

any attempt to exhibit his thought is met with a storm of ridicule. Here is the lurking egotism : To be sure, Shakespeare is the supreme genius of the world, but I can exhaust him at a single hasty reading ; to be sure, his intellect is most profound, but I can probe it to the bottom at a glance. It is so flattering to human vanity, and so easy compared with the tediousness of study, to say : I did not see that meaning when I read the play, and, therefore, it does not exist at all. But the fact remains that Shakespeare gives many indications of being acquainted with former systems of thought ; his allusions to Plato and Aristotle, even in his earliest works, would show that he had already in youth delved in the richest mines of ancient speculation. His power over abstract expression can be seen in all his writings, but it is the great and abiding interest of this drama that he gives the most direct and purest statement of his views of nature, man, and society. That there should be striking coincidences of ideas, and even of method, between the greatest thinker and the greatest poet, without either's borrowing from the other, is most credible ; both have the same ultimate thought though its utterance is, in general, very different ; each expresses the deepest and subtlest principle of his age — the one employing mainly the abstract forms of thought, the other mainly the poetic forms of imagination,

Such is the argument for the institutional world put into the mouth of Ulysses by Shakespeare. Never did thought defend more sternly and successfully the choicest acquisitions of the race. Still, to careful students of the Poet the doctrines are not new. Though he has nowhere else expressed them so completely or so nakedly, they really form the ground-work of all his dramas, and are the inspiration of his poetical activity. Why is Shakespeare the greatest of poets? Not because of his language, or of his imagery, or of his constructive ability, or even of his characterization; these are all very wonderful, indeed, but they have been reached by lesser minds. His supreme greatness lies in his comprehension and embodiment of the ethical — that is, institutional — world; its profoundest collisions he penetrates with his inevitable glance; he knows, too, their mediation and final solution. It has been the object of these essays, as the reader doubtless has perceived, to drop all minor points of view and hold the eye unswervingly upon this one element. It is truly the Shakespearian world, into which a person must be initiated if he would wish to stand face to face with the great bard. If we suffer the mind to lose itself in the externalities of his Art — in the words, in the figures, in the versification, or even in the characters — we can obtain but a very partial and very cloudy reflex of the total man.

A further observation may be added. The importance of this institutional element is not confined to the study of Shakespeare; it is the deepest moving principle of that which is vital and permanent in all literature, from the Homeric Epos to the modern novel. Men will cherish and hold on to what is highest in themselves, and the work of Art must adumbrate something which is of eternal interest; such as the conflicts in the Family, State, Society, and institutions generally. Criticism would do well to pay attention to them if it would rise out of the realm of mere subjective opinion to the dignity of a science, for thus it abandons caprice and fastens itself upon the most objective realities. In this connection one expression here deserves attention: "Right and wrong, between whose endless jar justice resides." Manifestly the collisions of the Ethical World are this endless jar between right and wrong, while justice is the institutional order which harmonizes these collisions by giving validity to the supreme right. The highest function of poetry is to reflect back to the man this order, which is the spiritual essence of the world.

Ulysses has now laid bare the evil under which the Grecian army is suffering; its logical consequence also has been unfolded. But these words are still general. Who are the authors of this present state of affairs? This question brings us to the other party of the Greeks. Achilles, the

mightiest warrior of them all, has withdrawn from active participation in the conflict and stays in his tent, mocking their discomfiture. The motive is offended vanity ; he has grown “ dainty of his worth ; ” he has not obtained the position which he thinks that his merit deserves. He also disapproves of the manner of conducting the war—there is too much strategy and too little fighting. An additional motive is given later—his tenderness for one of Priam’s daughters, Polyxena. To Achilles is joined Patroclus, his friend, who here appears as a merry mocker, caricaturing the leaders of the opposite party. But his humor has nothing malicious nor bitter in it ; his chief object is to make the weary hours fly more swiftly by some amusement.

Ajax, too, has turned sore-head, and refuses to fight ; his grievance also seems to be mainly unappreciated merit, though he is infected with the example of Achilles. Ajax represents mere physical strength without brain ; he is an immense mass of muscle. The difference between him and Achilles is that the latter has also bodily dexterity, and is possessed of more mind, though this is not excessive. Still, both maintain the side of force against the intellectual direction of the war, as upheld by Ulysses. To Ajax is joined Thersites, one of the most prominent characters of the play, whose utterances have impressed some critics so strongly that he has been considered to represent

Shakespeare's own opinions concerning the Trojan war and its heroes. The main purport of the whole drama has thus been found in his sayings. Thersites reflects the negative element of the Grecian enterprise; he sees the weak side, and only the weak side, of everybody and everything; in this field lies all his intellectual shrewdness. He is, therefore, the supreme fault-finder; his speech is nothing but biting satire; his "gall coins slanders like a mint." He cannot comprehend that which is universal and supreme in such a national undertaking; but he has the keenest eye and the sharpest tongue for the petty faults and foibles of the leaders, who are, after all, only the instruments for the accomplishment of a great principle. Ajax sets him to reviling the chiefs of the opposite party, though little of his abuse of them appears in the play, for Thersites evidently appreciated the intellect of Ulysses; but upon Ajax and Achilles he pours the full flood of his bile. Thersites and Patroclus are both attendants, and, to a certain extent, take the place of clowns; but the latter is a sportive humorist, who can laugh at the ridiculous phase of a cause which he at last dies for, while the former is the pure satirist, whose soul is blasted with its own curse, and who can have no principle to die for. He is, accordingly, an arrant coward.

Such are the two parties which have developed themselves in the Grecian army. It is the strug-

gle between the hand and the head — between force and intellect. Ulysses states the difficulty: The carefully elaborated policy of the leaders is called cowardice; wisdom is counted no member of the war — brain is to be governed by brawn: —

— “The still and mental parts
That do contrive how many hands shall strike
When fitness calls them on, and know by measure
Of their observant toil the enemies’ weight —
Why this hath not a finger’s dignity,
They call this bed-work, mappery, closet-war — ”

And so withdraw from the field of battle. These are the public reasons which Achilles and Ajax give for their course, though their private, and doubtless more potent, reason has already been stated to be a lack of due appreciation of their deserts on part of the Greek leaders.

But now comes the remedy, for intelligence here, too, must assert its supremacy and control in some way these men of muscle; they must be won. Ulysses will be equal to the emergency; the challenge just received from Troy furnishes the opportunity. His plan is to divide the opposite party. Ajax can be secured by a little flattery, which is at once administered with astonishing effect, for it even turns him into an enemy of his fellow-grumbler, Achilles. But the latter is a far more difficult case to manage, for he is not stupid, and really knows his own worth. No extravagant laudation can catch him; indeed, he

has long been used to it, and must have yielded ere this if such means were sufficient. On the contrary, the extraordinary marks of admiration which are still shown him by the Greeks serve to keep alive his haughty pride. Therefore the opposite method must be employed with him — instead of praise, neglect. Since it is applause which ruins him, Ulysses proposes to elevate another man over him: —

— “By device let blockish Ajax draw
The sort to fight with Hector; among ourselves
Give him allowance for the better man,
For that will physic the great Myrmidon,
Who broils in loud applause, and make him fall
His crest, that prouder than blue Iris bends.”

How clear the diagnosis and how suitable the medicine! It will be noticed that Ulysses always takes Nestor into counsel; the two then control Agamemnon. Nestor is the man of supreme appreciation. He, too, had his plan, for he first advised that Achilles be selected as the antagonist of Hector, but he at once abandons his own scheme when he hears the better one of Ulysses. He is not good at origination, but his judgment is without a cloud — without a trace of personal vanity.

The plan is carried into execution. Achilles is passed by without the customary marks of respect from the Greeks; he notices the slight and muses on the fickleness of popular favor. While in this

mood Ulysses passes before him, perusing a book with great intentness. A strange book was that for camp-reading in Homeric times. Ulysses cites from it the remarkable statement that man

“ Cannot make boast to have that which he hath,
Nor feels not what he owes, but by reflection.”

What can this mean, asks the horrified modern reader, with the metaphysical bugbear rising in his imagination. But Achilles, though rather lean in intellect, clearly understands the passage, for he illustrates it with a striking and appropriate comparison; indeed, to him “ this is not strange at all.” Wonderful men were those old heroes! The seed has fallen on good ground, and Ulysses enforces the same doctrine a second time with a much stronger turn of expression: —

— “ No man is the lord of anything,
Though in and of him there is much consisting,
Till he communicate his parts to others;
Nor doth he of himself know them for aught
Till he behold them formed in the applause
Where they are extended.”

The metaphysical deluge is again upon us. Is there, then, no plan of salvation? But the matter keeps getting worse. We might have pardoned that former abstruse discussion on institutions, for it was a theme so dear to the Poet; yet now he plunges remorselessly into the deepest psychological question known to philosophy. But what

has the devout man to do except to struggle after, with the prayerful hope of soon touching bottom? Ulysses here states the doctrine of reflection, and, what is more strange, he uses for his designation exactly the term employed in modern systems of thought. Man cannot truly possess anything unless his possession is reflected through others; nay, he cannot truly know anything till his knowledge is reflected back to himself through others. Then both possession and knowledge are real — objective; otherwise, they are idle figments of the brain. Man is not through himself alone but through his fellow-man; ideally he must be all in order to be himself.

All this reasoning, however, only prepares the way for a practical application of the doctrine to Achilles, who is thus caught in the web of his own principle. He has retired from active warfare. Can he be surprised, then, if he finds himself no longer reflected in the applause of the Greeks, but that Ajax has taken his place? The case is clear; all past fame is lost unless rescued by present activity. The controlling motive of his character is now reached, and to it is added the stinging reproach that he, the great warrior of Greece, submits to be the lover of one of Priam's daughters. Ulysses departs; and it shows the character of Patroclus — that he has before urged, and now again urges, these same views upon his friend. Patroclus is at bottom a patriot, though he must

have his joke at the expense of the leaders. The opposition of Achilles is manifestly broken, though he does not directly say that he will return and take part in the war. But afterwards he is present with the other Greek leaders at the intended combat between Ajax and Hector, and there challenges the Trojan hero.

So harmony seems again to be restored in the Greek army. It is the brain of Ulysses which is everywhere seen in these transactions; the feat is purely intellectual. When the fighting comes he steps into the background, and the interest diminishes. The great error of Grecian discipline—lack of subordination—he exposes; the breach between the leaders he heals by winning Ajax and then Achilles. He is the real hero, the intellectual hero. Such is the one side in this war. We are now ready to pass over to the other side, and take a glance at its internal condition. This arrangement of both Greeks and Trojans into two parties deliberating on their affairs, is Homeric.

(*b.*) The Trojans have also two parties within their walls; the division springs from a question of policy, namely, the surrender of Helen. A message has been received that her delivery to the Greeks will end the war. Upon this subject we are now to hear the deliberations.

Around Priam, who presides and who seems rather to favor the surrender, is gathered the wonderful group of his sons. Hector advises to

give her up. The hazards of war are uncertain ; many lives have been lost, and, moreover, Helen is worthless in character. It can be seen that Hector advances the ethical view ; caprice and passion cannot sway his judgment ; the Good is something real, and not an individual whim ; “ value dwells not in the particular will.” This last expression again sounds like a technical term of the schools, and vividly recalls *der besondere Wille* of German philosophy. But the strongest argument of Hector is based upon the right of the Family, of which the abduction of Helen was a gross violation ; “ the law of nature and nations ” demands to have the wife restored to the husband. The religious elements of Troy — represented by the priest, Helenus, and the prophetess, Cassandra — urge the same view of the question after their own peculiar methods.

But Paris and Troilus are strongly opposed to her surrender. The former claims that he had the consent of them all for his act. Still, if this were not the case, he would cling to his prize, for his controlling principle is, not moral goodness, but sensual love, which has its completest embodiment in the beauty of Helen. Troilus argues decidedly in the same direction. His own relation to Cressida renders him susceptible of the passion which now darkens his judgment ; but he has also another and better motive — the maintenance of the majesty of the King, his

father, and of the dignity of his country. To this last aspect of the subject Hector finally assents, clearly against his notions of right. National honor he feels, but it is chiefly personal glory that quenches the claims of conscience. Retribution will overtake both Troilus and Hector, in accordance with the nature of their deeds, as we shall see hereafter. So the great warrior is won, the two parties have fused, and Troy is substantially united in the determination to keep Helen.

Here ends the first movement with its two threads, both of which have a tendency toward unity. The war-thread which has just been developed has, perhaps, the most purely intellectual tinge found in the works of Shakespeare. So much reflection and so little action, so much deliberation and so little passion, cannot be pointed out elsewhere in his dramas. Then there is Ulysses, the supremely intellectual hero in a far higher sense than Hamlet. For Hamlet's mind is defective, if not diseased; it is forever caught in its own cobwebs, and cannot march forward to the deed. . But the thought of Ulysses, so profound yet so transparent, never destroys itself, but proceeds by necessity to realization; it must find itself reflected, to use his own term, in the world around him.

II.

But now the character of the whole drama begins to change; the thought becomes more jejune, the structure more fragmentary and confused. The second movement, which commences here (end of the 3rd act), is far inferior to that which has preceded, and grows worse till the end. But the two threads can still be followed, though their demarkation is by no means as plain and sharp as it was in the previous movement.

1. The love-thread, which portrayed the happy culmination in the emotional union of the pair, Troilus and Cressida, is now to exhibit their separation — both external and internal, both in space and in spirit. Calchas, the father of Cressida, who has performed many important services for the Greeks, demands that she be exchanged for a noble Trojan prisoner and brought to the Greek camp. The request is granted; Cressida has to leave Troy and Troilus; Diomed is sent to bring her to her parent. The parting scene of the lovers manifests anew their characters. Troilus feels the possibility of Cressida's desertion; she will be unable to resist the grace and flattery of her Grecian suitors. To be sure, she spurns the imputation of infidelity, but devotion has never been her supreme principle; hence her readiness to change individuals. The

chivalrous bearing and sweet compliments of Diomed seem to touch her favor, even in this scene, where she is taking leave of Troilus, who shows decided marks of jealousy — not without cause. She passes to the Grecian camp, where each hero gives her a kiss in turn, though Ulysses, the wise man, passes judgment upon her character. That judgment is very severe; it implies that she is without modesty and without fidelity.

She is already in love with Diomed; the tie of affection which bound her to Troilus is broken. The latter comes from Troy and beholds with his own eyes her faithlessness, and hears with his own ears her declaration of desertion. The struggle is a most intense one, but he gives her up and slips “the bonds of Heaven.” She says that her eye leads her mind — her love is for the last man whom she looks upon. The sensual side of her nature is here most strongly emphasized, whereas in the first movement her striking trait was the cool understanding which held control over her emotions; this is not a contradiction, perhaps, but certainly a difference. There is no retribution for her act; judged by Shakespeare’s usual method, her treatment is incomplete. But Troilus has tasted a little of his own advice before the Trojan council. He would not permit the wife, Helen, to be restored to her husband; the advocate of violent separation is himself separated from her whom he loved. Still, the

fact remains that the faithful man is punished and the faithless woman goes free.

2. The war-thread is next to be carried forward from the point where it was left. The hostile sides, having come to internal unity, are prepared for the external fight. Diomed is the messenger, and while he is among the Trojans he has occasion to give his opinion of the war. It is an intensely satirical view; both Paris and Menelaus equally deserve Helen, since they make no "scruple of her soilure," and the whole commotion is only a scramble for a strumpet. Diomed, like many a soldier since his time, evidently wishes that he had not enlisted, and damns the war. It has been already noticed that Thersites holds the same view; "nothing but lechery, all incontinent varlets," is his unvarnished characterization of the struggle and the heroes. But Diomed is a warrior and a chivalrous gentleman, while Thersites is the universal fault-finder and base coward. These two persons represent, in the main, the satirical element which some critics have found in the entire play, notwithstanding its far more elevated positive characters.

The single combat between Ajax and Hector now takes place, in the true mediæval fashion. But there is not satire here, in the proper sense of the term, for satire selects the weaknesses, the finite elements, of an individual, society, or great

enterprise, and holds them up to scorn and indignation. There is, however, burlesque in the entire account of the challenge and the duel, for burlesque puts its content into an alien form, as in the present instance the old Homeric personages and occurrences are thrust into the manners of chivalry. But, notwithstanding this humorous coloring, the collision of the two nations is genuine and earnest. The combatants meet; after a little fencing sufficient to clear the honor of both, Hector refuses to fight Ajax, since the latter is his cousin. Hector, though of the loftiest courage and generosity, is without pride; he is the antithesis of Achilles. He will not shed the blood of his own family, even if hostile; though the disgrace of the surrender hangs over him, he offers to throw down his weapons and to embrace his "father's sister's son."

So ends the first combat. Hector visits the Grecian princes; he receives knightly welcome and sumptuous entertainment. He there is greeted with a challenge from Achilles, who, however, will first honor him with the most gracious hospitality. There is a vein of incongruity running through these scenes which, added to the merry bantering of the chieftains, produces a ridiculous effect. But the challenge of Achilles is countermanded by a secret letter from Troy. Love in his case, too, triumphs over war; his "major vow" is the pledge sworn to Polyxena.

Thus the persuasive words of Ulysses are lost; the strongest motive of Achilles is here, not wounded pride—as we would certainly have inferred from the previous movement—but his passion for Priam's daughter. We pass at a bound from the old classic to the modern romantic motive.

But there is still another change in the motivating—his friendship for Patroclus is more powerful than even his love, since the death of Patroclus rouses him to go to battle, in which he slays Hector, though in a manner most cowardly and wholly inconsistent with both his previous position and character. It will thus be seen that the most elaborate and most profound part of the play—the reconciliation of Achilles through the dexterity of Ulysses—is without a purpose; it is a colossal instrumentality which produces no ultimate effect. On the contrary, a motive almost unknown, and certainly not developed in the drama, is dragged in from Homer to determine the result. Also there is a change in Hector; the most noble, generous, and humane of all the chieftains, Grecian or Trojan, perishes, though there is an attempt to justify his fate through his disregard of the entreaties of parents, sister, and wife, and of the omens of Heaven. But the deeper ethical retribution was prepared long before in the Trojan council, when he surrendered conviction mainly to desire for personal glory; the result is,

he is destroyed in its pursuit. But the parting scene at Priam's palace is clearly the motive intended here, and thus produces a new discrepancy.

The termination of this drama resembles a goodly ship going to pieces amid the breakers; gradually it splits asunder, and nothing is seen but the disconnected fragments floating on the surface of the angry waters. The play is literally wrecked. The characters become different, and even inconsistent; the great preparations of the first movement are inadequately carried out, or entirely dropped; the action and the structure are confused; unnecessary parts are introduced and necessary parts are omitted. To name the work has given great difficulty; it is not comedy, tragedy, history, or mediated drama; the editors of the folio of 1623 seem to have been doubtful about its proper classification. But, inasmuch as the true end is wanting, there can be no complete proof for any designation. As it stands, the war-thread terminates in the death of Hector, which must pass for tragic, though Hector is not the leading character of this thread. But the love-thread ends in mere separation, which is no solution at all, as there is no requital for the deed.

There is always a strong impulse to think out for ourselves some worthy termination of the work — to construct anew this noble dramatic temple from its ruins, in accordance with the es-

established principles of the Architect. The usual method of Shakespeare is to reward the fidelity of the woman with a restoration of her estranged lover — Julia, Helena, Hermione, Imogen; but the fidelity of the man to a treacherous or unreciprocating beauty is compensated by bestowing upon him another mistress, who will be faithful, as is seen in the first and second loves of Romeo, and in the case of Duke Orsino who obtains Viola in place of Olivia. The devoted Troilus deserves a change of individuals. Certainly none of the characters of this thread have a tragic motive. On the whole, the tendency seems to be toward mediation, though that tendency is by no means fulfilled. So much for the love-thread. The course of the war-thread might be: Achilles, under the influence of the intellect of Ulysses, is reconciled with the Greeks, goes forth to meet Hector and slays him in manful combat; the restoration of Helen follows with peace between the contending peoples. Thus the national collision is solved, and in the first movement of the play there is much to indicate some such conclusion. In this manner the present negative end is brought to a positive reconciliation in both the threads, namely, war ends in peace, and fidelity is rewarded with fruition. Thus the work is a comedy in which mediation is the principle. To reconstruct Shakespeare is an act of temerity, but it may be permitted to his faithful readers to think as com-

plete what he has without doubt left incomplete.

The purport of the whole play has been supposed to be satirical and also humorous. That both these elements are present in it must be at once granted, but they are subordinate. The collision is serious — between nations, and on both sides there is violation and justification — a wrong and a right. The Greeks vindicate the Family, but assail the State; while the Trojans vindicate nationality, but violate the Family. It is a genuine conflict in these institutions, and not a delusion. Moreover, the leading characters on both sides are imbued with deep earnestness. The satirists and merry-makers, in one form and another, are found in all conflicts of society, and hence, they are not absent even from the tragedies of Shakespeare.

To account for the marked inequality in this drama, conjecture has not been idle; the weak part is variously supposed to have been written by the Poet in his youth, or in a bad mood, or not at all by him, but by some other playwright or playwrights. It is, perhaps, immaterial which view is adopted; they have all quite the same degree of probability, and rest upon equally good evidence. We shall, therefore, indulge in no special discussion of this topic.

Some of the historical questions connected with this play remain to be considered. It was first printed in quarto in the year 1609 and was com-

posed some years before — how many years before, it is impossible to tell. Certain copies of this quarto have a very peculiar preface, which is worthy of study, being written by a great admirer of the poet. It declares that this is “a new play never staled with the stage, never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar,” that is, it has never been acted. The appeal is made to the reading public, and turns away from the play-going crowd: “the most displeased with plays are pleased with his (Shakespeare’s) comedies,” of which this is an example. The writer goes on: “Had I time, I would comment upon it. . . . It deserves such a labor as well as the best comedy in Terence or Plautus.” Thus the commentator on Shakespeare is suggested, and put alongside of the commentator on the ancient classics. Yet another prophecy follows: “And believe this, that when he is gone and his comedies out of sale, you will scramble for them, and set up a new English inquisition,” by which inquisition, we may conjecture, English poetry will have to be tested. Certainly a grand appreciation of Shakespeare’s genius and a prophetic intimation of his future supremacy lie in the somewhat enigmatic words of this oracle. Three things are here announced in advance: the grand army of Shakespeare’s readers; his commentator; his literary domination. This in the year 1609, during the poet’s life. *Troilus and Cressida* is,

accordingly, a play for reading rather than for acting, for the student more than for the spectator.

The student, it has been already said, finds a leading interest of the drama to lie in the fact that Homer, the first and oldest Literary Bible, is transmuted into Shakespeare, the modern Literary Bible, and that the ancient story of Troy is turned into a drama of the Renaissance. The Classic and Romantic worlds are not only placed alongside of each other, but are interfused.

What is there in common between the old and the modern poem? First, the external setting for both is about the same, as already observed; then the internal element, the ethical germ, is the same in both. In the *Iliad* as well as in *Troilus and Cressida*, "the specialty of rule hath been neglected;" the strong individual refuses to subordinate himself to the world-order, and has to be put under severe discipline. The offense of Achilles is the same in Homer and in Shakespeare; and, what is a better test, the ethical breach in the character of Hector is the same in both poets, and has the same outcome. But this ethical element is as yet implicit in Homer, while in Shakespeare it is not only explicit, but is voiced by the chief character of the play, Ulysses.

There are many allusions to Homer's incidents and personages in Shakespeare's works, but he could hardly have known the old Greek poet at

first hand. Latin literature must have furnished him with much Homeric information; many think he shows a Trojan bias in accord with Roman poets and mediæval legend. But a nearer source opened to him. In the year 1598 appeared the translation of the first seven books of the *Iliad* by George Chapman, the poet's fellow-dramatist and friend. Thereby a direct stream began to flow from the Greek to the English bard.

In *Troilus and Cressida* there are plainly two elements, which may be designated as the Greek and Greco-Romantic. The first is immediately derived from Homer, and implies a careful study of Homer's fundamental principle. Of the books of the *Iliad* the most significant for Shakespeare seems to have been the second. From it he took the suggestion of the character of Thersites, which is said not to be found in any of the other sources; but, what is most important, he took thence the suggestion of the character of Ulysses, together with the latter's relation to Nestor and Agamemnon. In the second book, too, he found the means for dethroning Achilles as hero. We can see no parody in this drama on Homer; on the contrary we mark a deep ethical sympathy on Shakespeare's part with his eldest poetical brother. So much for the purely Greek element.

Then there is the Greco-Romantic element in which we behold the ancient Hellenic world after

it has passed through the Byzantine and Mediæval time down to Shakespeare, and brought along with it the tinge of chivalry, love and romance of the Middle Ages. Here is to be placed the love story with its main persons, Troilus, Cressida, Pandar, whose names are found in Homer, but not their characters, which are an evolution of thousands of years.

The Greco-Romantic element in the story of Troy takes its start from two Latin books purporting to be translations of Greek originals under the names of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis. These books are usually held to belong to the fifth or sixth century after Christ; they change in many respects the narrative of Homer, but there is in them no story of the love of Troilus and Cressida. This was first put into the Trojan legend by Benoit Saint More, a French poet of the twelfth century, who in his *Roman de Troie* dipped the old classic tale in all the colors of mediæval romanticism. This book was translated into Latin about a century afterwards by Guido Colonna, of Messina, with some changes and additions. From Guido's Latin the story of Troy was turned into the vernacular of almost every European people, and became again the property of the world's literature, being wrought into many shapes — poems, novels, plays. Two poems sprang from it, which have kept a permanent place in letters — Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, in

which Pandar first appears, and Chaucer's *Troilus and Cresseide*, which was doubtless one of the sources of Shakespeare's work. Another source was probably Caxton's *Histories of Troy*, which was a translation of a French translation of Guido Colonna. Thus Shakespeare found the mediæval legend of Troy flowing in upon him, through two channels at least, from Guido's book — one in prose and one in poetry. To be sure, it is not known what sources he used; but he probably knew both Chaucer and Caxton, the chief English poetic and prosaic forms of the tale; possibly, too, he had read Lydgate's *Troye Book*. (For further details upon this subject see Hertzberg in the Shakespeare Jahrbuch, Vol. 6, *Die Quellen der Troilus Sage*; also M. Paul Stapfer's book, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*.)

Thus Shakespeare, with a true and universal sympathy, took up into his work the old and the new, the Greek and the Romantic elements. The direct Homeric stream, which had again been tapped at its fountain head by the Renaissance, he sets to flowing afresh through his poem. The indirect stream from Homer, which had wound down through the centuries, and had received many new hues in its passage, he also turns into his poetical garden. We have already noticed that Shakespeare, especially in his Comedies, shows a polymythical spirit; he lends a sympathetic ear to every truly mythological utterance

of a people, in which he seems to hear the primitive voice of poetry among men. Greek, Gothic, Italian, English legendary treasures he seized upon with equal avidity, and sometimes united them all into one poem, as in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The present drama is a new shift of his mythical combinations, not to be found in any other work of his, being a union of the Greco-Homeric and Greco-Romantic mythus.

ROMAN HISTORICAL PLAYS.

They are *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*. These are three great dramatic studies taken from Plutarch. For the poet here shows himself the student specially; he has to throw himself back into antiquity by means of books, and we observe that he everywhere gives signs of careful reading. But his work is not that of the scholar pure and simple, nor is it like that of some scholarly poets. Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* is a drama of Roman life, which follows the ancient authorities as strictly as a treatise on archæology, and goes back for them to the original language. The result is not a poem, but a versified essay.

Shakespeare took a translation of Plutarch, probably for the best of reasons. Nay, he took a translation of a translation, again for the best of reasons. Plutarch had been turned into French by James Amyot, a learned bishop of France; this French translation was turned into English by Sir Thomas North and published in the year 1579, passing through several editions somewhat rapidly for that time. North's Plutarch was, therefore, a well known book, when

these dramas were made out of it, so well known that it might almost be called a book of the people. Again we see the poet taking his materials from what had sunk deep into the popular consciousness.

To a greater degree, probably than any other ancient writing, with the single exception of Homer, is the work called Plutarch's *Lives* a book of the people. It was certainly a favorite with Shakespeare, who was in touch with the popular mind. On the whole, he keeps closer to Plutarch than to any source which he has employed; he shows a certain reverence for the old biographer. There must have been some deep and strong community of spirit between the ancient Greek and the modern Englishman.

And yet not altogether. Plutarch's plan of parallelism between Greek and Roman characters finds no echo, at least no direct echo in Shakespeare. Still further, the poet openly turned away from the great men of Greece and took only the great men of Rome for his purpose, though the two sets stand alongside of each other in Plutarch. Yet the Greeks are better portrayed by the biographer, and, on the whole, are higher and more interesting characters than the Romans. Greece was peculiarly the mother of great individuals, too great for their country's institutions, with which they generally collided. Not so the great individuals of Rome, whose prime princi-

ple was to subordinate themselves to Roman institutions, particularly to the State. With this institutional spirit in the Roman character, the poet, true to his Anglo-Saxon blood, sympathized, and all the Roman plays show in some form the conflict of the individual with the State and his final subordination. The Goddess Roma, with her mighty will, is the divinity in these dramas, while godlike Hellas, with all the gifts of beauty and intellect, is purposely rejected.

Plutarch was himself a Greek, who regarded Rome with the eyes of a foreigner. Thus Shakespeare gets his Roman characters at three removes from the primitive source, namely, out of a Greek biographer looking at the Roman world, who was translated into French, which French translation was translated into English, and this English translation was what Shakespeare read. Still the Greek has, on the whole, given a better account of the Roman world than any Roman historian. The theoretical Greek, at home in literature and philosophy, understood and portrayed the practical Roman better than the Roman could understand and portray himself. The Greeks were a thought-people, the Romans a will-people; thought can understand will, but will can seldom understand thought, as Shakespeare himself has shown in several characters. See, for instance, the contrast between Achilles and Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida*.

The best fountain of Roman history, accordingly was drunk of by the poet. North's translation, too, is a good book, written in strong, plain, practical English. It is more simple than the Greek style of Plutarch and more simple than the English style of Shakespeare. Good judges say that North has copied the peculiarities and even the mistakes of Amyot. But North made no pretense of going back to the original tongue, since he says of his book, "Translated out of Greek into French by James Amyot, — and out of French into English by Sir Thomas North." The Roman spirit, transmitted through a Greek, French and English brain and tongue, is what finally came to Shakespeare; still his creative insight saw the genuine Roman through all these diverse media.

And this leads us to consider Shakespeare as a reader. There is no doubt of his multifarious information. It is equally certain that he was not what is called a man of great erudition. Shakespeare read books creatively. There are three classes of readers: those who remember the facts, those who not only remember the facts but enter into the spirit, those who not only enter into the spirit but re-think the work freed from its shortcomings and mistakes. That is, there are the recollective, appreciative and creative classes of readers. Shakespeare was evidently a creative reader, re-creating the book in his own

way, which was the dramatic. So he read Plutarch, and probably every book. Nothing can be more instructive than to compare him with the biographer; such a comparison shows the poet in his workshop forming his materials. Plutarch too is transfigured by Shakespeare. The poet adds, omits; he transmutes abstract reflection into living action, he turns prose into poetry. Shakespeare read a good deal in his life, the traces are everywhere. He who has taught the whole world, must have learned something himself. How he got his learning cannot be told, and need not be known. But he had it, that is the certainty.

It has been often said that Shakespeare's Romans are Englishmen. With almost as much truth it may be said that his Englishmen are Romans. That means, there is a certain affinity between the two peoples which the English poet felt and portrayed. Both are essentially will-peoples, and both have made the national will a positive fact in institutions, which rule the world. To-day Rome furnishes the pattern of law, England the pattern of government. The movement of Roman and English History, is, in important respects, alike. In each there is a continual wrenching of charters from privileged authority and a getting of rights by those who had none—a tireless struggle on the part of the people toward institutions which guarantee freedom. The spirit

in both is the spirit of individual liberty realizing itself in forms which are universal. No modern Latin, no Teutonic nation, has quite such a history. And on the other hand, it must be granted that in their amusements, as well as in their dealings with other peoples, there is a harshness, yes, a brutality common to the Roman and the Englishman.

In fact, the English people have a Roman thread woven into their character and history, which goes back to Julius Cæsar himself. The Latin and Teutonic elements have entered into England's own spirit, into its language and literature, into its Shakespeare. The wave-smitten island seems to sway between the two tendencies at different periods of its development. In general, the Teutonic element is that of nature, the Latin that of culture. Back to nature, forward to culture, has been the oscillation of the time-movement. Our poet's century, the 16th, was essentially a Latin century. Warton tells us that about the year 1490 the classics began to be read in England. From that time during the rest of the century English scholarship devoted itself mainly to the translation, adaptation and imitation of the Latin poets. In the bloom of this activity Shakespeare rose, he is the flower of the Renaissance. Yet he has in him always the Teutonic element; indeed, we can sometimes trace in his works a re-action toward the Gothic. In

his comedies we have already noticed that the Latin or Italian and the Teutonic threads run along together, being strongly marked by a difference in style, color, meter, and characters.

The appreciation of Shakespeare seems to move on the same lines. The 18th was a Latin century both in its criticism (Johnson) and in its poetry (Pope). For this reason it was so hated by Carlyle, the stalwart apostle of Teutonism. The Shakespearian criticism of this century was a formal Latin criticism, not sympathetic with the entire poet, but with only a fragment of him, and that fragment somewhat external.

But the 19th century has been a Teutonic century both in England and on the continent. The cry has been, Go back to nature from the formal culture of Latinism. Poetry has had a fresh dip into its primal sources, and criticism has gone along. Schlegel, a German, and Coleridge, an Englishman, almost contemporaneously started the new spirit in Shakespearian criticism. Still in this century there have been Latin minds in England—those of Hallam and Macaulay, for instance—that did not fully fraternize with the Gothic nature of the poet. In like manner, the Latin peoples of Europe are still standing aloof, but are expressing no small admiration, while Germany has with love adopted him as the greatest Teuton yet born, or, as the French say,

has annexed him with violence to their own poetical domains.

Still the Latin peoples can claim a large share of the universal poet. Plot, legend, materials, they mainly, though not exclusively, furnished for his free use. Undoubtedly, too, they transmitted to him form — his dramatic form — from antiquity. The Renaissance showed him the classic drama, which he broadened and deepened till it could hold the modern world. Plutarch, however, is his most direct and decided point of contact with the antique time and spirit.

Shakespeare's affinity with Plutarch is emphatic, and may be studied from several points of view. 1st. Both biographer and poet break up the stream of history into its acting individuals. Thus the description of character is a more important matter with both than the narration of events. The history of a human soul weighs with both more than mere incident. The dramatic form and the biographical form herein approach each other. The biographer makes the start, but still dwells more or less in the external details of life; the dramatist completes the work, rounding it off and intensifying it by his art. Plutarch and Shakespeare thus seize individuality as their common principle. 2nd. We notice that Plutarch often drops into dialogue, and cannot help himself, particularly when he rises to his full power. Thus he approaches in form the dramatist; to a

certain extent he becomes Shakespeare in spite of himself. A number of characteristic passages, in which their spirits flow together in one, can be pointed out. We can often feel in a sympathetic reading, that there is a tendency in Plutarch to break over the limits of his art into the drama; he calls for the poet; Shakespeare hears his call and responds. 3rd. They are both ethical in spirit; they behold in events an order or law, which the individual violates at his peril. Plutarch, indeed, drops often to the abstract moralizer, which is hardly the case with Shakespeare, though he, too, is not without his moral apothegms. Each reveals in his own way the Ethical World, of which the occurrences of History are the manifestation. 4th. Both have a mythical vein, which they let run through their narration of historical events, and which shows in the biographer as in the poet the inborn gift of imagination. The sense of fact and the sense of fable go hand in hand in the two men. To this may be added the love of the supernatural, which is common to them, and which breaks out particularly when the time is big with some important event.

The dates of these three plays are usually given as follows: *Julius Cæsar* 1601, *Coriolanus* about 1608, *Antony and Cleopatra* is put down in the same year 1608. Of one thing we may be quite certain: *Julius Cæsar* belongs to the poet's middle period, while the other two belong to his last period.

CORIOLANUS.

In Coriolanus we behold an heroic character which, in its very heroism, bears the seeds of its tragic destiny. The poet brings before us a man who, having done a great and worthy action for his country, turns about and seeks to undo both his action and his country, but really undoes himself. He was the mighty defender of Rome; through his very excellence he is led into being its assailant. He was Roman versus Volscian, he is transformed into Volscian versus Roman. In this change the bitter outburst of Volumnia designates him: "This fellow had a Volscian to his mother."

Here again we see the deed turning to the opposite of itself—even the good deed; it has within itself a demon who may make it its own enemy, and whelm it into evil. Coriolanus becomes what he puts down—the foe of his country; thus he turns traitor to his own heroic action. The law, nay his own law, is read to him in all its strictness: as he put down the enemy of Rome, so he, the enemy of Rome, will be put down. What he in justice measured out to others,

is in justice measured out to him, by the World's Tribunal with a Volscean executioner.

Thus the cycle of the action is complete, and the drama, in its end, sweeps back and connects with the beginning. For the Great Deed of Coriolanus has the Great Temptation hidden in its very excellence; it has begotten in his lofty soul pride, defiance of the world-order. The individual in his success gets to thinking that he is more important than his country, than institutions, than even Providence. But the Deed of Coriolanus was great and worthy only because it subserved his country; so, in turning against his country, he really turned against his own Deed, undid it, as far as he was concerned, and therein destroyed himself. Thus the individual, even the heroic individual who has performed the highest achievements, is swept out, when he collides with the ethical order of the world.

Herein the career of Coriolanus brings to mind the career of Macbeth, who, after suppressing rebellion became himself a rebel, and was served with his own deed. The inner fiend which transforms Macbeth's action is ambition; he will be King and so assails his own heroic conduct in upholding the throne. But in the case of Coriolanus the peculiar trait which is nourished by his great deed is pride, which becomes so excessive that it will not tolerate anything which is a limit to

itself — not Plebeians, not Patricians, and finally not his country.

The opposite of pride the poet has in many places called patience, which always regards, and, if necessary, endures, the other — the other person, the other party, the other opinion. But Coriolanus had no patience; in addition to pride, he had a fatal temper which flashed into anger at any limitation, especially if put upon him by the people. In this respect, his character resembles that of Lear.

The result was, that Coriolanus, with all his pride, never showed any true freedom, any real self-determination in his conduct. His enemies, relying upon his inflammability, could turn him in what direction they chose; it needed but a word to drive him to revenge and wrong, whereby he put himself into the hands of his antagonists. We see how easily the Tribunes pulled the leading-strings of his character and directed the haughty aristocrat pretty much as they pleased, first annulling his election and then sending him into banishment. Thus Coriolanus is not determined from within, but from without; in spite of his pride, nay, on account of his pride, he has not developed into a free being, and, hence, is open to the stroke of fate. His enemies easily enter the fortress of pride and make the man there intrenched a prisoner.

But on another side the gate of this fortress is ajar, and can be entered. In one relation of life Coriolanus is not himself, the relation toward his mother. It is not merely love for her — for he loves his wife too ; his mother dominates him not so much by her character, as by a principle ; she has a synthesis over the highest point in his nature, over his pride. What is this principle of hers, which, after all, will control him, even to his destruction ? She has made the grand subordination, which he has not — namely, to country. This will, in the end, rule him, through her. Twice she sways him for her purpose, not his ; both acts are steps in his tragic destiny. A citizen at the beginning of the play, has graded the conduct of Coriolanus : “ Though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother and partly to be proud.” Here the order of motives is : country, pride, mother. Coriolanus himself puts his pride above country in these words, spoken about Aufidius, his Volscian antagonist : —

Were half to half the world by the ears and he
Upon my party, I'd *revolt* to make
My wars only with him ; he is a lion
That I am *proud* to hunt.

So early in the play (A. I. Sc. 1) revolt has entered his mind ; that which is now a thought, will become a deed. He can change sides, though

one side be his country. No such word is possible from his mother, and this is her power beyond and over him.

But we must not forget the good and strong qualities which spring from this pride. Apart from his valor and soldierly greatness, Coriolanus is a great moral hero. No flattery of the people or of anybody, no lying or tergiversation, no avarice, no mere desire to please, no office-hunting, no tuft-hunting, no vanity or love of adulation can be laid to his charge; he is too proud by far for such vices. He has a high sense of honor, he will imitate "the graces of the Gods," he has lofty ideals, we say. Still he is tragic in spite of these virtues, nay, tragic through these virtues. He becomes the moral Egoist and loses his charity. "I banish you," he cries when banished, his Ego is more than the State, more than the absolute monarch who said: "the State, it is I." Shakespeare in his three Roman plays has portrayed three such moral Egoists, in their full contradiction, which is tragic to themselves and their cause: Coriolanus, Brutus, Pompey.

Now we may consider the character which is opposed to Coriolanus, the grand protagonist on the other side — it is the people. This character runs through the whole play, and is drawn with great fullness; we may deem it a personality if not a person. Romanus Populus evidently

impressed the poet quite as strongly as Caius Marcius.

Romanus Populus is introduced to us in the play first of all the Romans; he is hungry, as usual, and blames the government for his hunger, or his lack of food. The State is paternal, and the parent has not supplied the boy with the necessaries of life, or with the means of making a living. Hence comes the demand to have something more than food, namely, rights, together with a hand in the government. The boy is now going to assert his manhood, being a boy no longer; he is determined to take the responsibility of looking after himself. Thus a new set of officers, the Tribunes, step forth, being designed to protect the commonalty, and it is manifest that Romanus Populus is rising out of paternalism, having become of age. We notice also that at this early day he has a tendency toward socialistic doctrines, demanding to have "corn at his own price," and even hinting at a general distribution of goods. Inasmuch as property is originally theft, the way to make it not theft is to steal it again. But he has certainly gained one very substantial thing; his protection has now become legalized, and is no longer capriciously paternal.

The portrait of the people shown in this play has been the subject of much and varied comment. In the main, it is thought to be unfriendly, and

Shakespeare is praised or denounced as an aristocrat. The populace is said to be held up as fickle, cowardly, cruel and envious. No doubt Caius Marcius utters many burning charges against his fellow-citizen Romanus Populus. But is he Shakespeare? Is he history? Or is he but the hide-bound patrician flinging sarcasms against his rising neighbors? Let us try to catch the main features of this portrait of the people.

1st. The external physical qualities of the multitude are set forth, with much humor, yet with some disrelish. They wear greasy caps, have reechy necks, and their teeth are not clean. It will have to be confessed, from the number of his allusions to the matter, that Shakespeare did not like to smell the bad breath of a garlic-eating people. Nor would he voluntarily have taken them as bed-fellows. Such was his taste, but we need not quarrel with him about it.

2nd. The frailties of the people, their follies, their defects of character are impartially laid bare in the interest of the truth. They are fickle but not corrupt here, though they will plunder the hostile town when it is captured. They are capable of a panic in war, and will run, but they cannot be called cowardly, for they certainly will fight; they are not as brave as Coriolanus, however. They can be roused to sudden gusts of passion, yet have equally sudden fits of repentance, especially when the consequences of their

conduct are upon them. If they show at times envy of the more fortunate patricians, they certainly manifest gratitude to Coriolanus under trying circumstances. Like every people before or since, they are subject to suspicion which is artfully whispered in their ears by the demagogue. Suspicion is the capital folly of the multitude, and the most inaccessible as well as the most incurable.

3rd. But, in spite of all their failings, the people are in the right as against Coriolanus and so shown by the poet. They are the bearers of the new idea; in their success lies progress, lies the future of Rome. The world which is to be, first dimly rises in these rude but honest hearts, and their life-struggle is to give it some kind of a birth though in poverty, dirt and obscurity. The spirit of the people is the World-Spirit, in this play as well as in History. Undoubtedly there rolls along with the people an avalanche of human frailty; still, in the long run they are the defenders, nay the originators, of the new principle. Here they are seeking to put a limit upon capricious authority — which is the supreme fact in the development of the free State throughout History. The commons will not be tyrannized over, therein they are the bearers of the political aspiration of the race. They wring from Coriolanus and his class, an institution which secures the best heritage of Rome. From beginning to

end we feel that the cause of the people is the cause of mankind, that the cause of Coriolanus is the cause of a little fragment of mankind, or indeed of one man, who seeks to "be every man himself."

Whatever be the weaknesses, follies, mistakes and sins of the people in external things, in the great matter they are right. Through all their delusions, passions, even vices, appears the one substantial fact: they are the chosen guardians of civilization. They are, therefore, saved, after a rough discipline, while Coriolanus perishes, justly and ingloriously. The poet voices History, whose impartiality he manifests, marking with keenest eye the finite transitory elements of the people, yet with a lofty optimism revealing their eternal element, which we may call the World-Spirit.

The Tribunes are but little above the level of the masses of whom they are the leaders. They are not brave in war, not soldiers, not heroes like Coriolanus, who towers above all. In the present case the hero is on the other side, is against the people. The contrast is drawn in the most striking way: the many as one versus the one as one. The Tribunes, however, have a good deal of political courage; they persist in maintaining the rights of the people, and therein do what they were appointed to do. There is a streak of the demagogue in them, though we must grant them

an honest belief in their principle; they are probably not without self-seeking in their zeal; they are narrow partisans, ignorant rather than corrupt. But their worst trait is that they are addicted to stirring up suspicion in the minds of the people, as if that were their particular duty and calling. Yet even suspicion has its rights, and the Tribunes are not always wrong in using this weapon against Coriolanus.

On the whole, nothing is so infuriating to the populace as suspicion. Not what is, but what may be, is the grand danger, which can be made to assume any proportion by the terrified imagination. The demagogue is well aware of this popular trait, and plays upon it without cessation. Still, even in this matter, he is usually as much the victim as the victimizer; he is the demagogue by virtue of his own suspicion. All peoples are capable of being maddened by this subtle sting; even the cool-blooded Anglo-Saxon can be made to writhe under its torture, and driven to acts of political folly. Not a national election goes by in this country without illustrating both its employment and its consequences.

The Tribunes are not great men, not unselfish men, still, with all their littleness and ill-doing, they are in the right and support the true interest of Rome against Coriolanus. Even their repeal of his election is not without a strong justification; they see by his conduct and speech while a can-

didate, that he will be a tyrant and a vilifier in office, and not submit his pride to law and civility. They are of the people and like the people whom they represent; they are laden with their own weakness, always a heavy burden; still in them lies progress, civilization, the future—they are the bearers of the World-Spirit. In lesser matters they are chiefly in the wrong; but in the one supreme matter they are in the right. Such is their character as drawn by the poet, who has simply listened with an impartial mind to the voice of History.

It should be noticed that the Tribunes do not stand out boldly from the great mass of the people, they are mouth-pieces merely, a little distinguished from the rest by the largeness and noise of the mouth. Then there are two of them speaking together usually in a kind of running duet without much difference between them. There is no strongly individualized man rising out of the mass, no great popular hero appearing as the antagonist of Coriolanus. In that case the people would fall into the background, they would not be a character in the play, Romanus Populus as a veritable person, though many-headed. Nearly every critic of this drama has made the mistake of saying or implying that the people are as wax in the hands of the Tribunes. Much truer is it that the Tribunes are as wax in the hands of the people. In fact, they are quite what the

people are, both in frailty and strength. Well it is that the Tribunes rise so little above the level of the multitude; the skill of the poet has put them into their true place. The mighty Individual versus the People is the case here on trial, which has to be at this epoch adjudicated by the World's Tribunal.

Coriolanus is essentially a drama of Political Parties. Internal dissension, through partisan organizations, is shown in a variety of forms; also other elements, as foreign war and the domestic relation, intermingle in the action and diversify its incidents and coloring. Moreover, the colliding principles of the two parties are aristocracy and democracy — the conflict which has always in History been most prolific of political strife. The main characters are graded according to their partisan bias and intensity, for the essence of the conflict is party versus country. Finally, the heroic figure of the drama is a person who cannot subordinate his hatred against a party to his love for his country. Great as is Coriolanus, Rome must get rid of him, and all like him, before she can conquer the world.

It will be seen that the action exhibits two distinct movements — the one of which terminates in the banishment of the hero, the other in his death. Coriolanus is portrayed as the great defender of his country, but also as the greater enemy of the plebeians; partisan rancor leads to

his expulsion — to his separation from Family and State. Herein both sides commit wrong. Such is the first movement. The second movement shows Coriolanus passing over to the enemies of his country, in order to ruin it and thereby ruin the opposite party. Patriotism is subordinate to partisan hate; even attachment to his own class cannot outweigh his desire for revenge. His nation and his order, therefore, cannot mediate his hostility to a party, but his family can, though at the cost of the life of himself, one of its members.

On the other hand, the two threads which run through the whole play are the political and domestic, in their manifold relation and interaction. The political thread is shown in both its internal and external manifestations, namely, in partisan dissension and in foreign war; while the domestic thread — the Family — has its various sides represented in the mother, wife, husband, son, father, neighbor, and friend.

I.

In the first movement it is the proud Coriolanus, whom we see gradually unfolding into the revengeful Coriolanus, who becomes the enemy of his country. Pride is the mother of revenge. The two lines on which his character develops are the political and domestic; these will now be given in order.

1. Taking up the first thread, we find that at the very beginning of the play the key-note is struck — internal dissension through parties. The people are riotous — not without cause, for they want bread ; they also recognize their chief enemy among the patricians to be Caius Marcius (Coriolanus). But even among the people is heard the voice of moderation — a citizen appeals to them to remember his services to the country. The demagogue, too, is present, who thrives on sedition and whose tendency always is to subordinate State to Party. Thus the one side is shown in its excess. Marcius now comes before us as the representative of the other extreme. He reproaches the populace with cowardice, insubordination, and fickleness, employing an intensity of language which could only provoke wrath, and even descends to mocking their personal habits — nay, he is ready to destroy them utterly : —

“ Would the nobility lay aside their ruth
And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry
With thousands of these quartered slaves, as high
As I could pick my lance.”

Here is manifested the wrong of Coriolanus ; he seems to think that nobody has even the right of life except his party. It is clear that no State can exist with such contending elements in its bosom ; one side must be eliminated.

But as we saw a moderate man among the ple-

beians, so also there will appear a mediator of patrician blood. This is Menenius, an old man of noble stock, but beloved by the people. His object is conciliation; his stand-point is the common country of both high and low; he reaches the people by his homely anecdotes. The fable of the belly and members treats of the necessity of harmony in an organization; each member must fulfill its function, and yet be subordinate to the purpose of the whole. Still, Menenius insists more strongly upon the central or controlling principle, as a good patrician should do; the people are to be cared for like an eternal baby. But they are determined to have established rights, and the special power of the tribunes to enforce them. Just now they are asserting the right to live against the right of property; they must have something to eat, though the corn belongs to another. It is the old story of all revolutions — a vested right has become a great fetter and a great wrong. The extreme principle of Coriolanus is to maintain what is established and to destroy the innovators; Menenius would also maintain the ancient system of things, with a paternal guardianship of the people. But the latter will be — indeed, are already — an integral, not an accidental, element of the body politic; they have secured certain privileges and the means for enforcing them, and thus they intend to participate also in the established institutions of the country.

But this internal conflict must now cease in the presence of the external one — the war with the Volscians. Here, again, there are two contending elements, each of which must be brought before the reader. The Volscian State is faintly sketched; it does not differ essentially from the Roman. We are told of a Senate and Senators; there is a hint of a system of espionage. But the main figure on the Volscian side is Aufidius, who is portrayed quite as the counterpart of Coriolanus, though with a personal jealousy which is foreign to the character of the latter. There is no world-historical principle at stake — the whole war has the appearance of a predatory foray, though Rome is, of course, defending the existence of the State, which has been attacked from without.

To turn now to the Roman side, we find that the campaign has been so arranged as to display the valor of Coriolanus in its most colossal manifestation. The army is in two divisions, though the hero is apparently a private soldier. The division in which he is present attacks the Volscian town. The Roman soldiery, made up of the common people, flee, while he maintains the contest single-handed; through his prowess mainly the town is taken. The contrast is here evident. Coriolanus possesses in the highest degree the patrician virtue of personal courage, which is not so highly developed in plebeian blood. But this is not the end of his heroic feats. He passes to the second division of the Roman army, distant

“not a mile,” which has just been driven back. With his presence victory returns, and for the sixth time he vanquishes his valiant foeman, Aufidius. We see the clear outlines of his character coming out; his chief trait is declared to be personal pride — strength of individuality — which he is ready to assert against every restraining power. With this pride the institutions of his country will conflict. The question is: Which principle must be subordinated?

He is received in Rome with great rejoicing; his family and his friends crowd around; the Senate gives him a public reception. But he is too proud — for it is hardly modesty — to hear his own praise; he seems almost to disdain recognition from mortals. In the general joy, party is forgotten by the plebeians, and he is elected consul. But he despises the means; the humiliating ceremony in presence of the people to which he is forced by them has excited his disgust and wrath; party spirit is again aroused and his election is revoked. Coriolanus cannot submit to an institution — his individual will is supreme. This first discipline of office — the suppression of his personal caprice and the submission to the established custom — cannot be endured by him:—

“What custom wills, in all things should we do’t
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And mountainous error be too highly heaped
For truth to o’erpeer.”

Hence on this side he is as revolutionary as the plebeians. The two parties thus reach the same point — the destruction of the institutions which restrain their tendencies. The patricians, however, as the true conservative element of society, seek to conciliate both sides and to retain the ancient laws and customs of the nation.

The next step of Coriolanus is to attempt to unite his order into a violent party, and to take away the tribunate and other privileges of the people. He appeals to the nobles with powerful arguments, but his effort is in vain. It is not their principle; indeed, it is the duty of authority to prevent the State from dissolving into its elements. Here is the point where Coriolanus separates from his order — the one subordinates State to Party, the other subordinates Party to State. Thus a new conflict arises. Coriolanus turns against his order, and falls back upon his own individual will — his pride — which he will assert against both parties, and even against the State. What is the result? He must leave, since such a man cannot be mediated; family, friends, class, are all brought in, but they cannot reconcile him with the existing order of things. He suffers the fate of the heroic individual amid institutions — he is banished.

2. We now pass to the domestic thread, which mingles with, and finally determines, the political thread of the drama. The Family, in its various

elements, is brought before us in a series of marked characters, representing its different relations. Volumnia, the mother of Coriolanus, is the typical Roman matron, who has subordinated her maternal instincts to the feeling of nationality. The death of her son she even could rejoice in, did it occur on the field of battle in defense of his country. Still, she is a patrician in the strongest sense of the word, though she does not carry it so far as to allow class-pride to conflict with her love for the whole Roman nation. There is no place for her husband here; all notice of him has been most judiciously omitted. Moreover, Coriolanus is clearly his mother's son, in the sense that he has inherited many of her qualities. Alongside of Volumnia, whose highest principle is nationality, is placed Virgilia, the wife, whose domestic tendencies and whose deep feeling of Family constitute a strong contrast to her mother-in-law. She will not even stir out of the house till her lord return from the wars. She is quiet and unobtrusive; her world is in the domestic emotions—in the love of her husband and child. Little as is said of her, we nevertheless behold the clear outlines of the ethical female character, which never fails to subdue the strongest men. Coriolanus has thus chosen a wife of a nature quite the opposite to that of his mother; both together control, finally, his will and his emotions. The little boy, the image of

his father's disposition, is added to make the Family complete. The hereditary principle here involved is worthy of notice. Character descends at one time through the mother, at another time through the father; the more intense individuality perpetuates itself. To this group of relations is joined another woman from the outside, the friend and neighbor, Valeria, who manifests none of the earnest traits peculiar to the other two women, but is distinguished by a light-hearted, gossiping tendency, which has but little to do with the sober realities of State and Family. She must, however, have had some strong fascination in her presence, as many such women have, for Coriolanus turns aside from the conquest of Rome to pay her a most gallant compliment:—

The noble sister of Publicola,
The moon of Rome, chaste as the icicle
That's curdled by the frost from purest snow
And hangs on Dian's temple.

When the news is brought concerning the battle, the mother thanks the gods that her son is wounded, but the wife is horrified at the thought. At last, when Coriolanus returns in all the glory and honor of his prowess, amid the acclamations of the people and patricians, the domestic relations of the hero are again introduced and characterized. First of all, he kneels to his mother;

respect and obedience to her he regards as the supreme duty. Then he addresses his wife, who is silent, though weeping tears of joy at his triumph. The delicacy of the delineation must be felt by every reader of taste and penetration. The mother now sees her strongest wishes, her wildest fancies, realized — her son has come to be regarded as the savior of his country. One thing remains — the summit of a Roman's ambition, the highest honor of the State is yet to be conferred upon him. How he destroys his prospects by his headstrong passion and pride, and by his hatred of the plebeians, has been already narrated.

The family relation is introduced the third time, in order that its attitude may be portrayed in this conflict between Coriolanus and the people. As the end is now a political one, the mother alone appears, for she has a political purpose throughout the play. What will now be her conduct toward her son? Will she side with his extreme partisan views, or will she be in favor of conciliation? Any one who has carefully observed her character hitherto will have no difficulty in deciding which of the two courses she will take. Volumnia has her deepest principle in the love of country, though she is patrician to the core, and hates the plebeians as a party. At this point she and her son separate; it becomes manifest that the ultimate controlling trait of

each is different. Even Coriolanus is mistaken about this element of her character; he is astonished that his mother does not approve his course — she who was wont to heap the most opprobrious epithets upon the people. Therefore he imagined that she as well as himself hated the plebeians more than she loved her country. Volumnia urges reconciliation; she advises him to dissemble his feelings — policy is her watchword; her highest personal ambition is to behold her son the chief man of the State. Still, he is obstinate; finally she intimates that he dishonors her — that death must be the result of his conduct. She also strikes the true distinction between them: —

“Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck’dst it from me
But ow’st thy pride thyself.”

Coriolanus yields, for the filial bond is the strongest in his nature; to it everything else finally bends. He seeks the people; a word causes him to lose his temper; his mother, after all, fails to mediate his partisan hate and subordinate it to the good of the country.

Such is the first general movement of the drama. It portrays Coriolanus in his transition from being the hero of the external conflict to being the victim of the internal conflict, with the attempted mediation of the Family. The difficulty is, Coriolanus cannot pass from the soldier to the citizen —

from war to peace ; the man of a different class or of the opposite party he regards as a public enemy — as a Volscian ; he transfers the intensity of the military struggle to the peaceful rivalry of the political struggle. Now, as party organizations are inherent in the very nature of the State, it is evident that such a man must be ejected from the State as incompatible with its existence. His political enemies, it is true, are not without guilt, for they seek to take every advantage of his weaknesses. Still, the blame must attach mainly to him. Now, what will such a person do in his banishment ? His mother fears his disposition as well as his dark intimations ; she desires Cominius to accompany him in his exile in order to keep him out of any alliance hostile to the country. How different is she at present from what she was when Coriolanus went forth to the Volscian war ! Now she seems utterly broken down, for her son is disrupted from the State and her hopes are crushed forever — that is, in separating from Rome he has separated from her highest end, while he was fulfilling that end when he was in the war.

II.

The second general movement of the drama exhibits Coriolanus in conflict with his country, and the successful mediation of his Family, though involving his own destruction. The main

stress must, therefore, be laid, in this part, upon the external collision of the State, since the existence of the latter is threatened from without, as its repose was previously assailed from within. Coriolanus will pass over to the enemies of his nation, for such a course lies in his stand-point, as hitherto developed. His hate of the opposite party is greater than his love for the whole country; hence he can readily sacrifice the latter to the former. A patrician State, or no State at all, is the maxim of his conduct. Thus he was really not a true Roman; he did not accept the Roman constitution as developed up to that time, for that had already become a mixed government of aristocracy and democracy. Or, to express the same thing in different language, his pride has carried him into conflict with the highest institutions; that heroic individuality which shone forth with such grandeur in the Volscian war is now manifested on its negative, destructive side, for it asserts itself against the demands of patriotism. Such is the inner connection of these two movements.

1. We shall first follow out the political thread to its conclusion. It has two phases — the Volscian side, which now includes Coriolanus, and the Roman side which shows the inner re-action and the outer peril of the city, till the Roman mother does her supreme deed.

(*a.*) Coriolanus, in disguise, first seeks out his

greatest foe, Aufidius. Why should not they be now reconciled, since the object of their enmity has become the same — since both seek to destroy Rome? Before entering the house, Coriolanus, in a short soliloquy, seems to comprehend the true nature of his conduct; he intimates in a general way that his sudden separation from friends and country has no good ground, and that his sudden friendship for Aufidius is equally destitute of a reasonable foundation. Still, he will not, can no, retrace his steps. There is a feast in the mansion of Aufidius; the servants are busy with preparation; the host, after some delay, is brought in to Coriolanus. The latter reveals himself, announces his desertion of Fatherland, and then gives his motive and his purpose:—

— “In mere spite,
To be full quit of those my banishers,
Stand I before thee here.

— I will fight
Against my cankered country with the spleen
Of all the under fiends.”

Revenge is above life, above country; and pride has begotten revenge. Aufidius, in the impulse of the moment, receives his new guest with the strongest expressions of gratitude and love, and offers on the spot half of his commission. Of this generosity he will afterwards repent.

The Volscian army is mustered and sets out

for Rome. Coriolanus has become its idol on account of his soldierly qualities; war is just the element in which he is seen to the best advantage. Moreover, a change in his demeanor is noticed; he has quite laid aside his former insolence, and can even descend to flatter the Volscian commonalty. The reason is manifest—he is ready to subordinate his most intense personal feeling in order to acquire the means of accomplishing his revenge. But Aufidius, among his own countrymen, has been cast into the background; his jealous nature, which before showed such ugly traits, is excited afresh; a conspiracy is formed for the destruction of the new-comer. When Coriolanus yields to the entreaties of his mother and spares Rome, an adequate ground of accusation is furnished, the old Volscian enmity is again stirred up, and he falls a victim to that people whose interest he had, no doubt, betrayed.

(*b.*) We now pass to the Roman side as portrayed in this thread. The city is quiet after the departure of Coriolanus, though the nobility are vexed at the result. The plebeians are now the object of the deepest hate of his mother; she curses the tribunes for their conduct toward her son. Still, with all her provocation, she does not allow her enmity of the common people to overcome her love of country. The strongest and most severe test has been given; her ulti-

mate principle is manifest. The citizens are congratulating the tribunes on their victory, when there arrives startling news. Coriolanus has gone over to the enemy and is marching against Rome. A second messenger confirms the information; now commences the re-action. The tribunes begin to see the consequences of their conduct. First, the reproaches of the patricians are tauntingly uttered in their presence; but, secondly, their supporters—the people—are much more violent against them; in fact, their death seems imminent. Still, they have committed no crime which deserves a tragic fate; after being badly frightened, they are spared.

But the Volscians are at the gates of Rome; resistance is no longer possible; there must be some speedy relief, else the city will be taken. Cominius, the old companion in arms, goes out to mollify Coriolanus; the effort is fruitless. Then Menenius, the dearest friend of Coriolanus and his family, succeeds in reaching his presence after much difficulty. The old man with tears beseeches him to pardon his own countrymen, and tries to excite in his breast some affection for country. But class, friends, and Fatherland are subordinate to his revenge; to his partisan hate he seems ready to sacrifice all ethical institutions. Even his family he abjures; wife, mother and child I know not, says he. But he

does not comprehend fully his own nature ; this form of mediation, after the failure of all others, is now to be tried.

2. Hence the domestic thread is introduced at this point in order to save the State from the impending danger. The various members of the family of Coriolanus appear before him in the Volscian camp. The internal struggle begins with great intensity in his bosom ; he melts at their sight. Still, he will not “ be such a gosling as to obey instinct.” His wife speaks first of their sorrow caused by his conduct ; but Coriolanus shows the deepest element of his character when he kneels in humble reverence before “ the most noble mother of the world.” She, on the contrary, offers to bow down to him with a sharp reproach of filial disrespect, an act of humiliation which seems to startle Coriolanus as the utter perversion of the true relation of persons. It is clear from these passages that his strongest instinct is reverence for his mother, and thus the outcome of her embassy must be the obedience of her son. His relative weakness is already implied in that grand comparison at the beginning of the interview : —

My mother bows
As if Olympus to a mole hill should
In supplication nod.

Still, the struggle cannot be settled at once ; the idea of “ capitulating again with Rome’s

mechanics” comes up to his mind in all its repugnance. After the wife, the child, and the friend have done their part in softening his emotions, the mother takes up the argument and presents it with telling emphasis. It is the Family pleading for country with one of its members, since it must perish with that country. How dire is its wretchedness: —

“Making the mother, wife and child to see
The son, the husband, and the father tearing
His country’s bowels out.”

Here the domestic relations are stated in full. But this is not all; the conflict extends into religion — their prayers for him and for country are a contradiction. The highest principle of Volumnia has been stated to be nationality; if she cannot mediate her son with her country, she will seek death from his very act: —

“Thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread
On thy mother’s womb
That brought thee to this world.”

Here we have the strongest and most terrific image of filial violation. Strangeto say, the wife, Virgilia, now utters the same sentiment; her mild nature has been absorbed in the colossal will of the mother. That is, his family, in all of its relations, will be swept away in the destruction of the State. The only exception is

his boy, another genuine Coriolanus, who will not submit to be trampled upon by an enemy. Still her appeals are not answered; she begins to despair of success. Then, with lofty contempt, she turns away, disowning her motherhood: —

“ This fellow had a Volscian to his mother.”

And all his other domestic relations are denied to him. This is too much for Coriolanus. His strongest tie he can allow to be severed; he might even contemplate his mother dead; still he would be her son. But disowned — denied to be her offspring — that cuts deeper than her death. He yields, Rome is saved, but he declares to his mother that he will probably have to die for his act. To which declaration she gives no answer — country is, with her, above son; its salvation being accomplished, she and the rest of her relatives return to receive its gratitude. Family has thus mediated the conflict of the State by immolating one of its members. The Roman mother has consciously sacrificed her son to her country.

We thus find that Coriolanus did finally meet with something to which he yielded. Pride is the word employed by the Poet, and his various transitions may be regarded as so many phases of his pride — of his refusal to subordinate his individuality to any external power. First, his pride conflicts with Aufidius and the foreign enemies of

Rome, and makes him the heroic and patriotic soldier of surpassing valor. Second, his pride conflicts with the plebeians, an internal party of Rome, and makes him the violent partisan. Third, his pride carries him to the extent of conflicting with the State, and makes him the enemy of his country. Fourth, his pride submits to the Family—in particular, to his mother; here, then, it has found its limitation, a limitation which is hinted on the very first page of the play. There a citizen says that Coriolanus had, first of all, as the motives of his actions, the desire to please his mother, and then pride.

The final solution of the drama, namely, this mediation of the external collision of the State through the Family, seems to be not without certain drawbacks in our thought. Wars are not thus ended, generally; the domestic element is not the reconciling principle of the nation. The difficulty lies in the original fable, and makes it indeed a fable—unnatural, impossible, but perhaps affecting on account of its very one-sidedness. When we reflect that the Roman Family was almost wholly merged in the man and in the nation, we may account for Volumnia, but Coriolanus is still a mystery, or at least an exception—an exception which must be eliminated from the Roman State.

Still, given these characters, with their relations as here indicated, this drama is a consistent and

most skillful piece of workmanship, and is at the same time adorned with the fairest poetic coloring. There is in it much beautiful, much intense expression; sometimes, however, it verges upon extravagance and bombast. The style is not easy, though rich and overflowing, having all the breaks, leaps, and fanciful subtleties that belong to the poet's last period. The character of Coriolanus, though imposing, is not very interesting to most mortals, being as hard as enamel, first with pride and then with revenge. The play has great unity, but it cannot approach *Julius Cæsar* in popularity or merit.

It is well known that this play was taken directly from North's translation of Plutarch, which was itself a translation from the French of Amyot. There is no doubt Shakespeare was under unusual obligations to the ancient biographer, still between the two there is seen quite the difference between poetry and prose. A short comparison we shall make under four heads: structure, incidents, characters, language.

As to structure, the general movement of the drama and the biography is the same: from Coriolanus triumphant in war to Coriolanus banished, thence the sweep to his death. The careful elaboration of the domestic thread, which starts in the first act and runs through every act to the end, is the work of the poet, who obtained his suggestion from the part of the women in the

last scene of the biography. The Volscian part, as an independent strand of the action, is not found in Plutarch; especially Aufidius is wrought out in fullness by Shakespeare.

The incidents are in the main the same in the poem and in the biography, but they undergo many a change. First we notice a new arrangement of them, as when the trouble about corn is made the starting point of the play, which is not the case with the biography; or, as when Aufidius is brought from Antium at the end of the biography to Corioli at the beginning of the drama. Then there is a compression practiced by the poet; two or more seditions are united; the story of the secession to Mons Sacer is compressed into one statement. Then much is omitted, especially events which are essentially alike, as the conquest of towns by Coriolanus. Finally come the additions, which are many and important, all tending to give dramatic vivacity and unity, to deepen the thought as well as to motive the action. For instance, the capital fact that the Tribunes recall the vote for Coriolanus, after it has been given, is not found in Plutarch, where the people reject him for consul from the start. In this instance the opportunity is made by the poet for the people to show their gratitude, and for Coriolanus to show his pride. Shakespeare is more impartial to the people than Plutarch. In characterization the play stands far above the biography,

as in this field Shakespeare is far above Plutarch. The leading figure, Coriolanus, has more life in the drama with essentially the same outlines. What a vigorous introduction of him: —

What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,
That rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
Make yourselves scabs!

The people, too, are an actual character in the play, hardly in the biography. In their first words we hear Public Opinion selecting the enemy of the people: —

First Citizen. First, you know Caius Marcius is the chief enemy of the people.

All. We know't, we know't.

Menenius, with his humorous turn in the play, is a dry moralist in the biography. The mother, Volumnia, is a Roman mother in Shakespeare, much completer and vivider than in Plutarch. Yet the hint, the naked outlines of these characters, are in the biographer; there is a likeness yet a supreme difference. Here lies the mysterious touch of the poet; he transfigures the stony features, they pass from death to life, the same, yet surely not the same.

As to language a similar transfiguration takes place. North's English is solid, plain, idiomatic, but little metaphorical — a moral and practical prose. Shakespeare turns this speech into poetry, and his Pegasus fairly thunders at times

through the air, as, for instance, when Lartius says to Coriolanus: —

Thou wast a soldier
Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible
Only in strokes, but with thy grim looks and
The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds
Thou mad'st thine enemies shake, as if the world
Was feverous and did tremble.

This is from North's mild prose: "For he was even such another, as Cato would have a soldier and a captain to be, not only terrible and fierce to lay about him, but to make the enemy afraid with the sound of his voice." The anachronism about Cato is the poet's, not Plutarch's, inasmuch as the latter here speaks in his own person, while the above speech in verse was put by Shakespeare into the mouth of Lartius. Still even North furnishes a metaphor now and then to the poet, as for instance, "we nourish the cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition." North, too, is the original of that terrible image: "Thou shalt tread upon thy mother's womb."

On the whole, Shakespeare adheres more closely to Plutarch at the end of his drama than in the beginning, and the biographer himself grows more dramatic in the last part of his work. Following the two carefully and comparing important passages, we see how Shakespeare to the last loved mighty expression. A little sentence of Plutarch he charges with the dy-

namite of his genius and explodes it with a mighty detonation. The line between bombast and sublimity is not always clearly drawn in Shakespeare. Still we behold here Plutarch transfigured into poetry. The language, as already stated, is of the poet's last period, and seems to us to be most akin to that of *Winter's Tale*, both in its merits and its defects — strong but not smooth, highly colored yet often somewhat crabbed and far-fetched, tending to overweight outer form with inner meaning.

Plutarch is Greek and essentially statuesque. His book is a gallery of sculpture, of lofty antique shapes, arranged in two parallel rows, on one side Greek, on the other side Roman, between which the reader passes and gazes with wonder. But in Shakespeare these shapes begin to move, they jump down from their pedestals and run through the hall, and perchance speak to the spectator; the beautiful form of stone has turned a living man, nay, a modern man, and the regular, architectonic proportions of the structure itself seem to have shot suddenly into a Gothic wilderness of forms. Yet Shakespeare and the Gothic cathedral have their law as well as Plutarch and the Classic temple.

There is a connection between this play and *Troilus and Cressida*, which lies in history, though it may not have been in the consciousness of the poet. The trouble in the Greek

camp before Troy and in the whole Greek world, is, "the specialty of rule hath been neglected;" there is no subordination of the mighty individual to the State. In *Coriolanus* we have just this struggle also, but the outcome is the victory of the State over the mighty individual. Rome in this play makes the grand synthesis beyond Greece, at the beginning of her career. She casts out the great, though refractory citizen, and puts down his spirit, which Greece was unable to do. She has to subject her strongest man to her law, ere she can be lawgiver to the rest of mankind. Both political parties in Rome, having conquered themselves, can now conquer the world.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

This is Shakespeare's most popular play. It is a favorite with old and young, with learned and unlearned, with man and woman. It is read by some who can read no other work of the poet, and is, on the whole, the best introduction to Shakespeare. *Richard III.* may be regarded as a better acting-play by the ordinary audience in the theater; *Hamlet* may be chosen by the thinker as a better reading-play for the closet. But *Julius Cæsar* takes all classes into its favor. Its meaning is, in general, clear on the surface, yet its waters run very deep, and challenge the thinker to sound them. It has but few antiquated expressions, and those few are so firmly imbedded and borne along in living English speech, that they, though dead, are still well known, as for instance:—

This was the *most unkindest* cut of all.

The language of *Julius Cæsar* has never dropped out the fresh stream of human utterance, but remains to-day the ideal of English speech. The play has not merely grand poetry, but brings before us the supreme example of

popular oratory, and of its power over people. This oratorical element is, perhaps, the chief reason of its strong hold upon the young men and even the boys of Anglo-Saxondom, whose earliest ambition usually is to become public speakers. The speeches of Brutus and Antony are not only the turning-point of the drama, but the axis of the World's History at that moment. Popular oratory, as the mightiest influence which one man can wield amid free institutions, has here its highest manifestation.

Then the People itself is portrayed, is held up in image to itself with impartiality; thus the work is popular in another sense. The play has, on the other hand, as its theme, the mightiest personage of profane history — the man, who “like a Colossus” bestrides the chasm of Time which separates the ancient and modern worlds. And all the leading characters are thrown into huge outlines, which make them visible from afar, and show the great types of men of public affairs in all times. There is another strange power in the play never to be forgotten: it has a certain mysterious connection between the physical and moral elements of the world; Nature is shaken to the center in some subtle harmony with the convulsion of the State; we feel a common demonic energy at work in the minds of men and in the elements. This secret, unfathomed energy lies deep in the popular faith, and is the full-

charged atmosphere of lofty poetry. There is a strong current of electricity running through the very words, breaking out into thunder and lightning and tempest, till the reader forgets the imagery in the reality, and feels the mighty shock of the time. Nature herself seems to respond to the social earthquake.

With the present essay we shall proceed in a different manner from our usual method. As *Julius Cæsar* is now and is destined to be the chief play for reading and study in schools, and as it is unquestionably the best one for making the acquaintance of Shakespeare, we shall treat the subjects pertaining to it by topics and not on the line of dramatic structure, as is the general method of these essays. On the whole, a topical treatment is easier for the beginner, but the structural element must not be left out. It will, accordingly, be given under a special head.

Cæsar's part in the play. — The most subtle yet fundamental matter to be considered in the play is this part of Cæsar. He hovers over it from the beginning to the end, as a spirit; his influence is all powerful, ever present, yet strangely elusive. In the very first scene we see the Tribunes resisting in vain that invisible power, which, under the name of Cæsar, has taken possession of the people of Rome and which has put down Pompey. In the last scene of the play, the same power has made an end of Brutus and

Cassius, has armed Antony and Octavius with its own energy, and is striding victorious over the plains of Philippi, where lies the corpse of republican Rome. It makes little difference whether Cæsar be present or absent, be dead or alive, he is always around and at work.

This mighty unseen energy which enfolds and makes electric the play from beginning to end, is Cæsar as an idea, or, as it is repeatedly called by the poet himself, Cæsar as spirit. We hear Brutus saying.

We all stand up against the *spirit* of Cæsar;

and he goes on in the same passage to draw the contrast between the body of Cæsar and his spirit: —

O, that we then could come by Cæsar's *spirit*,
And not dismember Cæsar, —

then the body of Cæsar would not have to bleed. This, to be sure, is spoken by the idealizing Brutus, but the sensuous Mark Antony gives to Cæsar's spirit the tremendous power of retribution: —

And Cæsar's *spirit* raging for revenge,
With Até by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice,
Cry Havoc, and let slip the dogs of war.

At last this spirit of Cæsar, rising up from its own world and taking shape to mortal eye, ap-

pears to Brutus as a ghost and speaks; it appears twice to him, since he is internally ready to behold such an appearance, while the fate of his cause is drawing near: —

Brutus. Speak to me what thou art?

Ghost. Thy evil *spirit*, Brutus.

Brutus. Why comest thou?

Ghost. To tell thee, thou shalt see me at Philippi.

On the battle-field of Philippi the spirit of Cæsar is indeed at work, and Brutus may well exclaim: —

O, Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!

Thy *spirit* walks abroad, and turns our swords

In our own proper entrails.

Even Epicurean Cassius, whose philosophy will not allow ghosts, is brought to utter the same meaning, when his sword, which ran through Cæsar's bowels, enters his own breast: —

Cæsar, thou art revenged,

Even with the sword that killed thee.

Thus a spirit-atmosphere encompasses the whole play and charges it with strong magnetic currents from the invisible realm. But we ask ourselves, what is the rational principle underlying all this sport of marvels? The one only answer can be given: the spirit of Cæsar is the World-Spirit. It is the movement of history, the march of civilization, the dawn of the new

epoch, of which Cæsar is and has been the bearer. The great change has taken place through him as the instrument, and cannot be turned backward, even by good men like Brutus, or by strong men like Cassius. It is not a personal thing, not personal even to Cæsar; it is the reality of the race, the greatest of realities. From this point of view, the supreme question which the reader of the play has to settle with himself, is, Which is right, Brutus or the World-Spirit?

But Cæsar has another side, which is portrayed by the poet with the most rigid impartiality, almost to the point of irony, which dissolves the great man in his own short-comings. Opposite to the universal Cæsar, in whom the Idea rules and finds manifestation, stands the individual Cæsar with all the weaknesses, caprices, and follies of the finite individual. Cæsar, though he is the World-Spirit, is also a poor mortal. Even his bodily ailments are vividly set forth. He is deaf of one ear, he has epileptic fits, he swoons when the crown is offered him the third time. Then follows a whole train of spiritual infirmities. He is superstitious, though a philosopher; he has fear, though a soldier. Indeed he has the worst kind of fear; he is afraid of being thought afraid. This last trait is the direct means whereby he is entrapped, and led to death.

Decius is the little man who sets himself to catch great Cæsar. He has observed the one small foible of the mighty genuis: —

I can o'ersway him, for he loves to hear
That men * * * may be betrayed
With flatterers * * *
But when I tell him he hates flatterers,
He says he does, *being then most flattered*. —
I will bring him to the capitol.

For no other purpose is unimportant Decius given an important part than to show the individual Cæsar lassoed with a thread in the hands of a pigmy. We see Decius at work in Cæsar's house, when the latter has resolved not to go to meet the Senators: —

Decius. If Cæsar hide himself, shall they not whisper;
Lo, Cæsar is afraid!
Cæsar. Give me my robe, for I will go.

Thus the great whale bites at the little man's pinhook, is caught, and, what is more wonderful, is landed high and dry, to be carved at will by the daggers of the conspirators.

Yet amid all these infirmities are glimpses of his deep sagacity. How quickly he selects his real antagonist out of the multitude hanging about him! This is Cassius, the man who "thinks too much," the intellectual enemy of Cæsar's principle. Moreover Cæsar puts the hostility of Cassius on its right grounds, namely,

on thought, on a conviction that springs from reading and observation, not on envy which, in spite of the critics, is not meant in the passage: —

Such men as he be never at heart's ease
While they behold a greater than themselves.

Thus Cæsar detects at a glance the plotter and organizer of the conspiracy, and rightly holds him “very dangerous.” But here again mighty Cæsar is afraid of being thought afraid, and accordingly, he seeks to recover himself: —

I rather tell thee what is to be feared,
Than what I fear, for always I am Cæsar.

In other places we find the universal Cæsar who is not afraid, seeking to bolster up the individual Cæsar who is afraid, employing lofty words and brave-sounding apothegms to frighten fear: —

Cowards die many times before their death;
The valiant never taste of death but once,
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear.

Very true and very apposite; you, O Cæsar, are yourself afraid, else you would never have said these things. Thus Cæsar the Great tries to brace up Cæsar the Little, with a dose of nerve-strengthening philosophy. No blame to Cæsar; every man administers to himself the same medicine when he is in a tight place and has to meet peril, and sometimes without much effect.

It is manifest that Cæsar in this play is in great labor, the labor of upholding his mighty deed, and the mighty name which has sprung from it. He is overwhelmed with his own greatness, and he seeks to keep it up without letting his individual, merely finite traits appear. But the very effort brings out the weakness of the attempt, nay, the inherent falsity of his position, and we behold him slashed to pieces by his own unconscious irony. His great deed is too great for his personal character, which breaks down under the burden. He has become a God to himself; he often addresses himself as Cæsar in the third person, speaking as if he were somebody else, in a style of lofty sovereignty. It is the individual Cæsar seeking to cope with the universal Cæsar, and showing an incongruity in speech which often approaches a burlesque on himself: —

Danger knows full well
That Cæsar is more dangerous than he,
We are two lions littered in one day
And I the elder and more terrible.

Here he denies danger, denies that he is exposed to hazard, really he denies his own finitude. And the fact is, this is true of Cæsar as spirit, not true of Cæsar as individual.

This attempt of Cæsar the Little to cope with Cæsar the Great is kept up till the blow of the assassin's dagger, when the final proof of finitude

is reached. He is shown refusing a prayer for mercy; "if I were as you, prayers would move me," but he is not as others; "I am constant as the northern star," to grant pardon on petition would be to show emotion, a human trait. But the prayers continue, and he divinely dismisses them: "Hence, wilt thou lift up Olympus," the home of the Gods? This is the climax, he has deified himself; in a moment after, as soon as he throws off the human relation in passing by the friendship of Brutus, the blow falls, and the individual Cæsar lies in his own blood; with him foible, frailty, folly, have vanished.

Yet Cæsar remains, he is imperishable, is an idea, a spirit. At a stroke the mortal Cæsar disappears, not so the spiritual Cæsar, who still strides through the drama as strong, yea, far stronger than ever, for he seems to move freed of his clinging human weaknesses. Out with this petty phantom called life—what is it? Spirit endures, the man—so we must read our poet. Behold, here is Antony who is prepared to conjure with the name of Cæsar, and will start a spirit with it, though Cassius has denied to it any such ability. But even Cassius will recognize that spirit in the end—the world-encompassing spirit of Cæsar.

Thus Cæsar is portrayed as sufficiently mighty in the play. Still it is clear that he lacks self-mastery, he had not duly disciplined the individ-

ual side of life; he shows pride, nay, insolence toward the Gods and want of mercy toward men. His greatness is really too great for his personal character. He might be merciful, yes humble, and still be conscious of his greatness. But his world-historical deed crushes the little man in the great man, taints his individual life, and ruins him in his finite relations. Genius may be a devil or an angel — a devil that blasts the personal character, or an angel that makes it perfect, giving to it a grandeur and universality not its own, as was the case with Socrates, with Washington. In fact, genius is always destructive unless it be tamed and trained into adjustment to the individual side of its own existence. Here Cæsar showed his weakness and was tragic, but men can have genius and live.

It was said above that Cæsar was struck down when he made himself a God, abjuring all change in himself, all emotion and pity, and turning away from mercy. No grounds of right are given by either side for asking or for granting the pardon of Publius Cimber; the request is hardly meant in earnest by the conspirators, who are simply seeking an opportunity for carrying out the assassination. Hence Cæsar may be held to be justified in his refusal; he may be regarded as the embodiment of law, which cannot yield to mere feeling; he may be thought to be right in being “constant as the northern star”

and “unshaked of motion.” Thus he perished for law, and Cæsar refusing mercy may be held to be the new order affirming justice in all its stability. But such a view hardly comports with the total characterization of Cæsar or with the rest of the drama. Cæsar here deifies himself and disowns compassion, hence the blow falls, which both reveals and ends the merely individual side of the man.

It must be granted that this is not a republican play, which it might be, if it ended at the death of Cæsar, with Brutus and Cassius washing their hands in the blood of their victim. The poet is true to the fact, the imperial idea has taken its lease on the centuries, and the death of the individual Cæsar is but a ripple in the stream of Time. *Coriolanus* is rather Shakespeare’s republican play, for in it the Roman People is triumphant over its aristocratic foe. But now the Roman People has a new function to perform.

Cæsar is dead, still Cæsar’s spirit has a body not yet destroyed, and far more powerful than its former little fortress of flesh. That new body of which Cæsar’s spirit now takes possession and sways with colossal might is the People of Rome, or the mob, if you please, which has life, nay many lives, and is able to give stroke for stroke.

The People. — Cæsar’s spirit, then, is incorporate in the People, and the People is the great

force lying back of the play, to which both sides have now to make their appeal. This ultimate fact we must grasp in the character of the People; it is the bearer of the World-Spirit, it is the second and final embodiment of Cæsar's Idea. Will the People move? On which side will it move? This question calls up the speeches of the Third Act, in which popular oratory plays its loftiest part in the destiny of the nation.

Both Cassius and Brutus speak on their side, but the speech of Cassius is not given, he was hardly the man to sway the multitude. It is certain that he produced no effect; the reason probably was given by Cæsar: "He thinks too much." The thinker is not the man to address those angry citizens who are clamoring: "We will be satisfied." But the reader of the play does not need this speech; he knows already Cassius' argument against Cæsar from the First Act, in the talk with Brutus.

Brutus, however, makes a speech, world-famous; yet a rhetorical, antithetic, artificial speech, whose sententious joints show the skeleton of discourse, and whose moral abstractions are bare bones of thought. It is a cold speech, yet his hot audience respect his character and applaud him. But how little they understand him or sympathize with his spirit! What a counterstroke he gets in that compliment paid him by one of the crowd: "Let him be Cæsar!"

Nothing is plainer than that Brutus is wholly out of touch with the People, and still he is not aware of the fact.

Now comes the speech of Antony, which is in touch with the People. It is, moreover, a warm speech, of surpassing skill, full of the red blood of life. It first glances at the charge of ambition against Cæsar, pointing out how he filled the general coffers of the State, how he sympathized with the poor, how he refused the crown. When the speaker is secure of his audience, he holds up Cæsar's bloody mantle, and uses it as a means for naming the three leading conspirators — Casca, Cassius, Brutus. The next point is the reading of Cæsar's will, which is the culmination — Cæsar makes the Roman People his children and heirs. Hear now the cry: "Go fetch fire — Pluck down benches — Pluck down forms, windows, anything."

A marvelous speech it is both in what it says and in what it leaves unsaid. Antony does not answer the charge of ambition; he could not, and it is well that he did not try. Cæsar's ambition was Cæsar's greatness. But Antony plays upon the People's emotions and passions with surpassing dexterity; at the same time he pretends that he does not know how: "I am no orator, as Brutus is." Then that most effective sentence, "Brutus is an honorable man," has an irony just transparent enough to be seen through and

caught up by the multitude, who are moved by it to vengeance against such men of honor. Antony has now voiced the spirit of the People, which has been struck at in the person of Cæsar.

The purport of this celebrated speech is drawn from the real fact in the case, and, hence, Antony seeks to bring before the People its own oneness with Cæsar. In the deepest sense the People is Cæsar's heir, his spirit is its spirit; his testament simply hands over to it what already belongs to it by the strictest inheritance. Thus the speech strikes the key-note of the play; Cæsar's spirit is that of the Roman People. We do not wonder then when we read the result of Antony's eloquence: "Brutus and Cassius are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome."

Such is Shakespeare's usual portrait of the People: it is changeable, capable of strong passions, and while these last, of ferocious cruelty, strangely spiced with a grim humor—witness the case of Cinna, the poet, who is torn to pieces on account of his name and "his bad verses." Many shortcomings it has, verily; still it carries in its heart the new epoch—the People is the bearer of the World-Spirit. The Many, through all their many-headed fickleness, never fail to come back to themselves, and therein show stability, yea, self-sacrifice. Thus the Roman People in this play is the image of Julius Cæsar himself; it is like him, weak, vacillating, super-

stitious, yet is a spirit bringing the world to come, the guardian spirit of History. It has its individual side, wherein it is little even in its magnitude; but it has also its universal element, wherein we may see, as we did in Cæsar, its worth and greatness.

It is often said that the People is like wax in the hands of Antony. Rather the opposite: Antony is like wax in the hands of the People. He is simply their spokesman, he tells what is already in their hearts. He is aware of this himself:—

I tell you that which you yourselves do know,
Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor, poor dumb mouths,
And bid them speak for me.

That is, Antony voices the People's spirit, which is one with Cæsar's, and stirs up their feelings at Cæsar's wounds, which are also theirs. In this play the People are not shown as corrupt, as is sometimes declared; they are not bribed in any way to be what they are not, or to be untrue to their deepest principle. To Cæsar's legacy they had a right as good as any heir; in fact, it was theirs spiritually already—the People possessed Cæsar's Idea, and his material goods followed, symbolically, as it were, in the same line of descent.

Still, even Cæsar had apparently found one limit in the People. They were his supporters,

but they would not see him crowned literally; they applauded when he, though unwilling, pushed the crown aside. This, however, was a mere sentiment, or Roman prejudice against a name, coming down from events in the early history of Rome. Cæsar was a King and greater; the People had made him such; but he must remain their uncrowned King. After all, this limit was no limit.

The two speeches have been made ever memorable as showing the two antipodal styles of oratory. The speech of Brutus is abstract and general, that of Antony is concrete and particular. The one may reach the man of thought, the other rules the People. Moreover, through the speech of Antony, we catch a glimpse of the might of Cæsar's idea, apart from the individual Cæsar. The caprices, foibles and follies are gone, the man remains in his pure grandeur. Nobody is a hero to his valet, runs the proverb; to which Hegel added: Not because the one is not a hero, but because the other is valet. For the valets of the world, critical and otherwise, can only see the individual side of the great man, not the universal, which is, however, just the thing to be seen.

Shakespeare's use of Plutarch.—From the point of view now obtained we can see the principle by which the poet arranged the materials derived from Plutarch. He did not take the life

of Cæsar and dramatize it, ending with the assassination; he had another plan. He used only the last few pages of Cæsar's biography and joined them to that of Brutus, to which he added certain points from the life of Antony. Three biographies of Plutarch furnish the materials of the play — those of Cæsar, Brutus and Antony.

We see that poet's principle of selection is to show Cæsar as the living man in contrast to Cæsar as spirit — Cæsar's triumph through death. Cæsar's fall would seem to be the natural end of a tragedy, and doubtless was in the case of those old plays on the subject of Cæsar. But Shakespeare made a great change, and probably with design. In fact, without a clear intention, he would not have ordered his materials in the present way; we may truly affirm that we here see the poet working by an idea, which seizes certain stray fragments of fact, throws them into the white-hot furnace of genius, then pours them forth into his dramatic mould, out of which comes a new man in a new world still the old.

Plutarch, therefore, did not furnish the order in which this play is written, as he did in *Coriolanus*, and in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The poet has taken bits of him here and there, and filled up the gaps with his own free invention and strong dramatic life. The outlines of the characters remain the same as in Plutarch, yet they are deepened and intensified. But the language is almost

always the poet's own; occasionally he versifies a little passage from Plutarch. In general, the events and the characters are given the poet, but they undergo a poetic transfiguration.

The many prodigies which lend a peculiar color to the drama, are found in Plutarch. Yet the poet has intensified this characteristic also. For instance, the lion which meets Casca in the streets, and the hundred ghastly women are not found in Plutarch. This undercurrent of religion or superstition breaking up through the thin coating of philosophic culture, is also drawn from Plutarch, but wonderfully vivified by the poet.

On the whole, the drama is far more original than the biographies, which simply follow the order of these lives as they were lived in time, and end with death. But the poet's point is to carry Cæsar beyond death. He is indebted to Plutarch for his materials, but Plutarch is indebted for them to some preceding author. They are not the biographer's invention, they belong to the world. Who can make the most of them? His they are by the first right.

It is not easy, but quite necessary, to make real to ourselves the change in the materials once handled by Shakespeare. They seem the same, yet marvelously not the same, as they were in the original sources. An old forgotten Italian tale is put into the poetical laboratory, and there comes out the *Merchant of Venice*; a contemporary En-

glish novel is taken in hand, and we read, as the product, *As You Like It*; biographical bits are smelted together, and *Julius Cæsar* is the result. What is the magic? Those materials are transformed, yet present and recognizable; whereat many have cried out: Shakespeare stole. If so, then the supreme gift of the poet is to know how to steal. But this process? We may call it poetic alchemy, or spiritual transfiguration; yet these are but words which may be without ideas. Famed in all ages is this miraculous power; it is the true Promethean touch which puts life and soul into that which was a mere shape of clay; and yet that clay had the form and feature before, which it showed after, the touch. Shakespeare himself has told of it in a fleeting shred of song sung by a spirit-voice: —

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

The word “Honor” in the play.—We can sometimes catch pivotal words, which an author employs, unconsciously for the most part, to give emphasis to his leading thought, or to bring out the main point in a character. The most important word in the play is “Spirit,” being used frequently and in a pronounced manner; as already stated, it suggests the main idea of the work from beginning to end, as well as the right

conception of Cæsar's character. It is "Spirit," the word and the thing, which binds this drama into unity.

Another word which is continually rising to the surface of the play is the word "Honor," together with its cognates, "honesty," "honorable," etc. This expression also belongs to a special character; it is used particularly by Brutus and concerning Brutus, so that we may say, Honor is Brutus' word. It is Brutus who can "set *Honor* in one eye and death in the other," and who loves "the name of *Honor* more than I fear death." It seems to be the word which Brutus has specially assumed to designate his principle. Cassius recognizes it as belonging to Brutus: "I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus," and plays upon the word with a touch of humorous banter: "Well, *Honor* is the subject of my story." This humorous touch turns to decided irony a little later in the soliloquy of Cassius: —

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see
Thy *honorable* metal may be wrought
From that it is disposed.

Again, in the conspiracy scene, Brutus appeals to his principle, which binds him more strongly than an oath: "What other oath than honesty to honesty engaged?" But especially in his speech to the People he turns to this fundamental word of his life: "Believe me for mine *Honor*, and have respect to mine *Honor* that ye may be-

lieve.” Then it is caught up by Antony and wielded as a weapon of most cutting irony, with which he slashes poor Brutus all through his speech. “For Brutus is an *honorable* man,” indicates that just the opposite is the case. Again Honor comes up in the quarrel scene between Cassius and Brutus, which turns chiefly upon a question of Honor between them. Finally it is almost the last word on the lips of Brutus, who says to the servant who holds his sword while he runs upon it: —

Thy life hath had some smatch of *Honor* in it:
Hold then my sword * * *

This, according to Brutus, is the Honor of a servant: to help his master kill himself.

Now what does Brutus mean by his Honor? The purport of it comes out not very clear to the reader; it could not have been very definite in meaning to Brutus himself. We catch from the above passages that others — notably Antony and Cassius — looked upon this fundamental trait of Brutus with some degree of irony. Brutus was a student, a philosopher; he cultivated himself on the moral side of his nature. Personal integrity he had, and a lofty self-reverence, for which we admire him; but this self-reverence turned easily to self-righteousness, and we behold in Brutus the moral ego developed to its last potency of self-assertion. He always overruled Cassius to the injury of the common cause. His Honor, then,

must be called moral Egoism, which sees its own right, but the wrong of everybody else, who has a different opinion.

This Honor indicates the strong point of Brutus' character, till it reaches an excess which overwhelms him and his cause. Cassius sees the whole bearing of this trait in Brutus, yet is himself not firm enough internally to resist it. For the weakness of Cassius is, that he yields too much to Brutus, the mighty man of Egoism, being overborne by the latter's moral force, which runs counter to political insight. Still Cassius called up this spirit by appealing to it in getting Brutus to join the conspiracy, from which his Honor ought to have kept him away. Thus Brutus yields to Cassius, when he ought not, and Cassius yields to Brutus when *he* ought not. The Honor of Brutus dominates fatally the whole movement of the conspirators, and Cassius has conjured up in his own party the power which he cannot lay again.

In view of these facts, we are inclined to think that those critics are right who wish to mend the line in the famous quarrel scene where Brutus says to Cassius: —

Do what you will, dishonor shall be humor,

Let the line be read as follows: —

Do what you will, honor shall be my humor,

and we have an utterance in every way characteristic of Brutus. For Honor is not only his word,

but will be now his humor, his caprice perchance. This is given in reply to Cassius, of whom it cannot be said that Honor is his humor. Still the first reading may continue to do service, if we conceive of Brutus injecting a little sarcasm into the expression. But this quality is, on the whole, foreign to his character.

Philosophy in the play. — Over the whole time is spread a thin coating of philosophy, which is, however, but another name for skepticism. There is no faith in the Gods, no belief in auguries and victims; the old Roman religion has vanished quite in the new culture, though certain ancient forms and ceremonies remain. Rome has turned philosopher. We see that the critical understanding has undermined faith, and a crust of disbelief covers all the better class of society. It is indeed a time of spiritual change and upheaval.

There are four philosophers brought before us, not including Cicero, who bears no important part in the drama. Cæsar is a philosopher, or has been, though recently a re-action has been noted in him: —

For he is superstitious grown of late,
Quite from the main opinion he held once
Of fantasy, of dreams, and ceremonies.

So his philosophy has broken down in the face of “these apparent prodigies,” which fact may

“hold him from the Capitol to-day.” Brutus is a philosopher, Cassius is a philosopher, the one a Stoic, the other an Epicurean. Even a woman philosopher appears, to make the philosophic family complete — Portia, the wife of Brutus. The reader asks in surprise, What does the poet intend to do with all these philosophers, of whom one would seem to be more than enough?

The truth must be announced in all its nakedness: he makes every one of them break down and renounce their philosophy in presence of the crucial facts of life. Will philosophy tide them over through misfortune and defeat to death? Not a bit of it. We have already noticed how Cæsar in this time of prodigies has broken with his former opinion. Listen now to Cassius, the disciple of Epicurus, who denied providence and immortality: —

You know that I held Epicurus strong,
And his opinion; now I change my mind,
And partly credit things that do presage —

Whereof he gives a vivid instance. Then when he hears of Portia's end, he cries in a kind of confession: “O ye immortal Gods.” So much for Cassius as he looks out upon approaching death.

But how about Brutus, whose problem is not that of God and immortality, but of suicide. If

the battle is lost what will you do? I shall act,
he replies: —

Even by the rule of that philosophy,
By which I did blame Cato for the death
Which he did give himself * * *
But I do find it cowardly and vile
For fear of what might fall, so to prevent
The time of life, — arming myself with Patience,
To stay the providence of some high powers
That govern us below.

So Brutus wraps himself up in his philosophy
and is resolved not to be guilty of suicide.
Then comes the startling question: “Are you
contented to be led in triumph through the streets
of Rome?”

No, Cassius, No; think not, thou noble Roman,
That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome,
He bears too great a mind.

Thus the lofty philosophy topples at a word,
and vanishes beneath the waves of life's sea.
Brutus commits suicide in spite of its being cowardly
and vile — he the high-toned moral philosopher.

But will the woman turn out better than the
men? Alas! already before the above passages
were spoken, we have had the notice of her
death: “She grew distract and swallowed fire,”
on account of the absence of her lord and grief
at the success of Antony and Octavius. So she
too breaks down in the trial, she who had made

proof of her constancy by giving herself a voluntary wound in the thigh. The woman philosopher, then, is like the men, yielding a little in advance of them, and in the great Roman tragedy, along with the philosophers, philosophy itself commits suicide.

This philosophy, it is true, was but a Roman plaything, constructed by cunning Greek brains for the amusement of the conquerors of the world. It was like Greek Art, Greek Science, Greek Culture generally in Rome: a mere decoration, an outside polish which never reached to the heart of the Roman. Very naturally, too, else it would have made him Greek, made him indeed the conquered instead of conqueror. Certain Roman writers pursued Greek studies, but they are imitators, they are not the best Romans, they lack somewhat of being truly themselves, namely, originality. For this reason Roman Literature is not really Roman, it fails to give the Roman spirit in its truth, it is not the best Roman thing.

Now the Roman was not a philosopher, his mind was not theoretical, but practical; his speculative culture he drew from the Greeks, and he took, of course, only the surface. Just as little as the ancient Roman is the modern Anglo-Saxon a philosopher. England, no more than Rome, has created a philosophy; the names she points to, from Bacon, Hobbes and Locke down

to Mill and Spencer, show rather the denial of philosophy. The great Anglo-Saxon poet, true to his own people and true to Rome also, makes this play the tragedy of ancient philosophy in Rome. The Roman flung it off like a garment, in the last battle of life; it was not a part of his soul.

But this ancient philosophy in Rome was only a superficial fragment broken off from the complete Greek structure — Stoic, Epicurean, Eclectic. The great integral philosophies of Plato and Aristotle did not perish in the Roman tragedy; they are alive to-day, as they have ever been, and are showing no little energy just at this moment. Philosophy as such is not tragic in the present drama, but the Roman veneering of it is and ought to be, for the whole thing is false, a mere shadow trying to appear as substance. When it came to life and death in good earnest, the Roman showed himself a Roman; he slew himself when his State, or his idea thereof, was lost. Into this thin ice of philosophy flashes the lightning of reality, see, it is all broken to pieces and melts to nothing.

We may behold the point of connection between the English and Roman minds in this play, as in none other; we may also note the poet's line of sympathy with Plutarch. The latter was a Greek and a philosopher, but treated Roman characters in parallel with Greek characters.

Shakespeare, however, has used not a single Greek character of Plutarch's for a complete drama. Timon, Alcibiades, Theseus of his plays can hardly have been taken from Plutarch, at least not directly. The great will-characters of Rome are what fascinates the English poet, in their interplay with the Roman State, the most colossal institution of the world.

Philosophy thus commits suicide in Rome, with good reason, and is a part of the tragedy. Herein can we not see another touch of that peculiar irony which seems to run in under-currents through the play? Philosophy, the grand discipline for meeting fate, itself yields to fate, at the fateful moment. If it be made but the toy of life, what is it good for but to be broken and thrown away when the serious moment arrives, namely, death? Philosophy denies itself at the final test; that is, it stabs itself along with the other Romans.

Here a word upon the commentators, of whom a good many have committed suicide by their comments upon the expressions of Brutus cited above. Some find fault because of the two opposite opinions on suicide, and declare the character to be inconsistent. Others dexterously explain away the inconsistency, showing that there is none, if the words be rightly understood. Still others try to show that Shakespeare, as if stone-blind in intellect, was led into the incon-

sistency by following a typographical error in North's Plutarch. But on looking at North's words, we find that they are plain in meaning, and do not express the inconsistency aforesaid, which is, therefore, most emphatically the intentional act of Shakespeare. The commentator, if he succeeded, would destroy the conception of the poet, who throughout makes Brutus consistent in his inconsistency, for Brutus is the extremely moral man who commits the most immoral deed known to men in the very excess of his morality. His conduct was a case of suicide long before he was himself such a case. Beware of the commentators, including the one now addressing you, my dear reader; the whole set of us will bear watching.

The poetic atmosphere.—The action of a drama is often encompassed by a certain element which we feel and breathe rather than see and understand, yet which is in the subtlest harmony and interplay with the idea of the work. This is what we call the poetic atmosphere, which, in *Julius Cæsar* is quite as powerful and significant as the action itself. It is full of portents, strange noises, unusual sights, extraordinary happenings; we feel certain mysterious forces at work from the beginning, which are not to be subjected to reason, yet persist in being and working despite of their outlawry.

The atmosphere of *Julius Cæsar* is electrical.

When we breathe it at the start, we feel it to be charged with great changes; electric flashes of the future play through it and around it, lighting up dark and angry skies and then going out in night. Everything is symptomatic, the reader himself gets symptomatic, and feels his own pulse. A certain weird foreboding lurks in the very air — a ghostly presence; it is big not only with the present, but with what is to befall. Into the drama drop riddles which are not solved; as, who told Artemidorus of the conspiracy, or how has the soothsayer come to know the exact date of the future deed, heard in his uncanny shriek: “Beware the Ides of March?” The elements are stirred, the heavens menace, but there is one defiant spirit:—

For my part I have walked about the streets,
Submitting me unto the perilous night,
And, thus unbraced, Casca, as you see,
Have bared my bosom to the thunder stone,
And when the cross blue lightning seemed to open
The breast of heaven, I did present myself
Even in the aim and very flash of it.

This is Cassius, the man who is resisting the new change, and who presents himself “in the very flash of it.” Moreover all this perturbation is connected with one man:—

Now could I, Casca,
Name to thee a man most like this dreadful night,
That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars
As doth the lion in the Capitol.

This man is Julius Cæsar, who is surrounded by these prodigies, which break out of the unknown realm, in whatever way he turns. He cannot help being infected by the portents in spite of his philosophy, so he has “grown superstitious of late.” His terrors have indeed good ground, his premonitions, which he tries to suppress, will turn out true. On every side he strikes against warnings, and everybody connected with him, particularly his wife, gets an electric shock. These terrors are not merely his own imaginings, they shadow the reality. The individual Cæsar has run his career, and shows it; his mortal side appears in every phase, he is about to perish. The soothsayer, Artemidorus, Calphurnia, the angry elements are prophesying truth; they are telling what must transpire. The terrors of Cæsar himself show him staring at death and shuddering in spite of himself. Cæsar is the battery which has made the whole world electric, and he will be killed by his own current. Everywhere around him is seen a portentous symbolism full of foreboding and foretelling:—

Fierce, fiery warriors fought upon the clouds,
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol.

Cassius.—The man who represents the complete hostility to the spirit of Cæsar, is Cassius. He stands for the old Roman State, which was always

averse to letting itself be embodied in one person. Hence there were two consuls in Rome, above both stood lofty Roma in her majesty, the ideal abstraction of the State, not to be incorporated in any individual representative. Hence there was no Ego in the State; to the Idea every Ego was subordinate, without exception. Rome hated kingship, which embodied the majesty and power of the State in one person. The Roman would not tolerate the individual as supreme. The State is not I, but I am the State's. Undoubtedly this was the all-absorbing power of Republican Rome. It devoured the whole world to fill that empty abstraction, the Roman State, and then was not satisfied.

Now Cassius represents this spirit in the play. As a Roman he resents anything like awe or honor paid to the individual: —

I had as lief not be as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.

This is not envy or ambition on the part of Cassius, it is the old Roman contempt for the individual as such — for himself as well as Cæsar. "I was born as free as Cæsar, so were you;" why then this awe or adoration? "And this man has now become a God," this petty individual. Mark these weak sides of him: I saved him once when about to drown in the Tiber, and he cried, "Help me, Cassius, or I sink;" he whined out

like a sick girl: "Give me some drink, Titinius" when he had a fever in Spain. Hark now the old Roman character breaking out directly: —

When could they say, till now, that talked of Rome,
That her wide walls encompassed but one man?
Now is it Rome indeed and room enough,
When there is in it but one only man.

Such is, indeed, the disgrace, or rather, the destruction of Rome, when it has *but one only man*; and at one time, unquestionably the eternal devil could have kept "his state in Rome as easily as a king," or the one only man.

It is this characteristic which Cæsar notes in Cassius with the glance of genius. Cassius is the old stern Roman, though an Epicurean in philosophy; he loves no plays, he hears no music, seldom he smiles; also he thinks and observes. Finally Cæsar draws the conclusion: —

Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves.

Which is not the charge that Cassius is envious, or wants his (Cæsar's) place, but, that he will not suffer any individual to lord it over his individuality, as supreme head of the State. For this reason, Cassius is truly dangerous, his very being springs from his deep-seated Roman republican principle, which must hate "the one only man."

But the time has come when this Roman abstraction of the State is to take on personality.

The dualism of two Consuls, two Tribunes or more, must be gotten rid of, and united in the one Monarch, who has, or may have, heart, feeling, soul, which the Roman State had not, though it did have most tremendously abstract justice. This great change is, to a certain degree, a recognition of the individual, the State is now to secure his rights and not destroy him. This principle — the Monarch in the State — has never been abandoned since Cæsar; it exists even in the modern Republic. But the old Roman Republic immolated the individual to the State absolutely, and of this mighty impersonal abstraction Cassius was both the practical and intellectual upholder. He did not make the great transition of his age, but fought the World-Spirit, and therein was tragic. But *Respublica* — the public thing, so the Romans called their State — has changed and become a person; the highest in Rome is now not a thing but a soul, a spirit, and this is the work of Cæsar.

It has been implied throughout this discussion that History was right in bringing forth Cæsar, and causing him to triumph. The World-Spirit has been taken as the final arbiter in the World's Tribunal. Whatever we may think of Cæsarism in its modern form and application, it was the great step in advance for Rome in the time of Cæsar. It is foolish to launch our thunderbolts at him from our stand-point in the present, because they do not hit him by some two thousand years. He overthrew the liberties of his country,

it is said ; rather he fulfilled them ; no one only man could overthrow them. Cæsar carried out the will of the Roman People, and executed the decree of the World-Spirit.

To be sure it may be said that History was all wrong and Cassius right. It may be said that Cassius, or more particularly, Brutus, represents the better future lying far beyond the Roman Empire, far beyond the Present — the ideal Republic which is to be. So Brutus seems to think himself: —

I shall have more glory by this losing day,
More than Octavius and Mark Antony
By this vile conquest shall attain unto.

Many readers agree with Brutus, and call him the hero in his defeat ; nay, some critics have held that such was William Shakespeare's view of the case. Cæsar, the Roman People, the World-Spirit, were all wrong, though victorious, while Brutus and Cassius had the right, though beaten. A few draw the final pessimistic conclusion from these premises: the good and just cause always in this world suffers defeat, which is the final mark of its excellence, while the less good or positively wrong thing wins the golden crown of triumph. The world is always going to the Bad, in spite of its progress.

There is no play of Shakespeare which forms such a test of the characters of the readers as this *Julius Cæsar*. What is their opinion of Cassius,

of Cæsar? It will largely reveal their thought and disposition. Above all, what do they think about Brutus? Is he the hero, or the weakest man in the play? A great philosopher or a muddy-headed idealist? The martyr in advance of his time, prophetic of the modern world in his protest against Cæsarism, or behind his time, seeking to restore an old effete idea which had already taken its flight? Then that irony of the poet is so elusive; some do not see it, but take Brutus throughout in dead earnest from the hands of his maker. There are Brutus minds and Cassius minds and Cæsar minds reading the play to-day. Be, if possible, the Shakespearian mind, spanning them all.

Cicero.—We have an interest in the character of the great Roman orator, whose eloquence has given him a fame quite equal to that of Cæsar, the mighty man of action. But the poet says little about him, seems to wrap him up in a thin coat of philosophic doubt, which insulates him from the flashing electrical atmosphere around him. To Casca, who is charged brimful with the portents of the time, and whose words would galvanize a corpse, he dubitatively responds:—

Indeed it is a strange-disposed time;
But men may construe things after their fashion,
Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.

Off he goes, for “this disturbed sky is not to walk in,” just as little as this disturbed time is

Cicero's element. He runs away — *abiit, evasit, excessit, erupit*. The hint is furnished by Plutarch. The conspirators, he says, did not take Cicero, “for they were afraid that he, being a coward by nature, and age also having increased his fear, would turn and alter all their purpose.”

Yet Cicero is tragic, he is whelmed into the grand cataclysm of the time and perishes “by that order of proscription,” as we are carefully informed by the poet. So, in spite of his neutrality, yea, on account of his neutrality, he meets fate along with those who are most active. It is a part of the poet's creed: there are moments when the sin of omission equals the sin of commission, or at least is visited with the same consequences. The thin insulation of Cicero does not save him from the stroke of lightning. Listen to his conduct at the critical moment of the age:—

Cassius. Did Cicero say anything?

Casca. Ay, he spoke Greek.

Cassius. To what effect?

Casca. Those that understood smiled at one another and shook their heads; but for my own part it was Greek to me —

as it was Greek to the Roman People to whom the orator was to speak. Why did he speak Greek? Probably not to be understood just at this time, he did not have anything to say in Latin at such a conjuncture. Why did those who understood him smile at one another, and shake

their heads? Guess-work again; but it seems he tried to turn the whole thing off with some jest or witty sally in Greek. "He will not follow what other men begin," whether conspirators or friends of Cæsar; he is for neither side not very strongly. Such is the tragedy of the great orator; he, the speaker of Latin above all men, spoke Greek to the Romans at the turning-point of Rome. So oratory, too, turned tragic in the great Roman tragedy, as philosophy did; it breaks down at the crucial test, for it spoke Greek at the very moment when above all moments in Roman history it ought to have spoken Latin.

The two women, Calphurnia and Portia. — Both are wives, there is no love-making in the play, of the domestic phase of life only the marriage relation appears. Through their husbands, Cæsar and Brutus, the two women are whirled into the wild tumult of the time, and are made to reflect it, each in her own way and through her own character.

Calphurnia, Cæsar's wife, has been caught in the tempest and feels what is coming. Previously she had been a person of sober understanding, without superstition, but she has changed: "Cæsar, I never stood on ceremonies (signs and auguries), yet now they fright me." She has become a woman of feeling, indeed of fore-feeling; she has presentiments, visions, dreams —

dim prophetic warnings of the future event. She listens to tales of "most horrid sights;" in this highly excitable condition she is full of fears and forebodings, and even to great Cæsar, master of the world, she lays down the law: "You shall not stir out of your house to-day." Well it had been for him, if he had obeyed! Thus Calphurnia, in her deep unity with her husband, has become all feeling and imagination, which rises to the height of lofty poetry and even of prophecy. Cæsar himself is strongly influenced by her Cassandra words: "Thrice hath Calphurnia in her sleep cried out: 'Help ho! they murder Cæsar!'" Thus the electrical atmosphere of the time has been breathed by the woman too, and turned her brain into a highly sensitive plate which photographs the coming deed in a series of gorgeous fantastic pictures:—

Fierce, fiery warriors fought upon the clouds,
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;
The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
Horses did neigh and dying men did groan;
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.

Now comes Portia, wife of Brutus, long since famous, and destined to become yet more famous among the women of Shakespeare. He has endowed her with a trait which is a prophecy of woman, and which he has not prominently given to any other of his female characters. In por-

traying the emotional unity of the woman with her intended or actual husband, lies Shakespeare's happiest, sweetest, most fascinating gift. But now to this emotional unity he adds intellectual unity with her husband, as the ideal culmination of marriage. There is a union not only of hearts, but also of heads, and love becomes an eternal thought as well as an undying passion. She has kept pace with her husband in that most masculine of all studies, philosophy; and, it is plain that of the two her personality is the stronger. Yet she remains a woman, nay, a womanly woman; she even confesses to the weakness of her sex, which, however, is the very source of all their strength:—

“Ay me! how weak a thing the heart of woman is!”

The point of the little collision between husband and wife, which brings out the characters of both in the domestic relation, is this: Brutus will not tell Portia his great secret. She knows he has it by many a little sign, “musing and sighing with your arms across” and other small odd bits of conduct, to which the wifely eye is keenly sensitive. When she asked him “What the matter was,” he looked upon her ungently, “you scratched your head, impatiently stamped with your foot” and went so far as to make “an angry wafture of your hand.” Surely an explanation is needed. Brutus puts her off with

some weak excuses, which she tears to shreds and throws down before him, and then mounts her high horse:—

No, my Brutus,
You have some sick offense within your mind
Which by the right and virtue of my place
I ought to know of.

She takes her stand upon her right as wife, and makes the very test of marriage: no secrets apart from me. If the two be one not only in heart, but also in head, the wife must know what is going on in the brain of the husband, and above all, what concerns that personality of the Family which doth “incorporate and make us one.” With a keen tongue as well as a keen mind, she draws upon the quailing Brutus the logical consequence of his denying this right of hers:—

Portia is Brutus’ harlot, not his wife.

This is enough to take away any man’s breath, but Portia goes on acknowledging that she is a woman, but with the emphatic exception that she is “stronger than my sex, being so fathered and so husbanded.” She has cultivated the inner life, she has self-command, she is a philosopher; she will not blab like the ordinary woman, having “made strong proof of my constancy, giving myself a voluntary wound here in the thigh.” Brutus is fairly knocked down and gives up:

“By and by thy bosom shall partake the secrets of my heart.”

Portia gets the secrets, what then? She has a burden under which she breaks. She finds the task very hard and prays: “O constancy, set a mountain ’tween my heart and tongue.” Her confession is: “How hard it is for women to keep counsel!” Indirectly she lets the secret out:—

Prithee, listen well;
I heard a bustling rumour, like a fray
And the wind brings it from the Capitol.

Thus the strong woman, the philosopher, yea, the Stoic drops from reason to emotion, from head to heart, which goes to pieces in its own strong pulsations, and we read the outcome: “She grew distract and swallowed fire.” But what an eternal, ideal, epoch-making woman, by no means consumed or consumable by the fire of Time!

Not many lines does the poet give to Portia, but enough. We have in her the most modern woman that Shakespeare has drawn, so modern that she reaches quite over the present into the future somewhere. Yet she is the woman who lived in old Rome, for Plutarch has given us essentially the same portrait of her, though the poet with his few touches has transfigured it into a face of celestial beauty. There must be a marriage of intellects as well as of hearts, is her

doctrine, else heart and intellect may become estranged, and marriage turn out a failure. That Roman matron would have to step out of old Rome, yes, out of modern Europe, and cross over to America to find her sister, and even in this last-named country of freedoms she would be regarded as an emancipated spirit.

Relationship with other works. — It has been frequently remarked by writers that *Julius Cæsar* has many affinities with *Hamlet*, more than with any other Shakespearian play. The conjecture that both were written about the same time is probable enough; both certainly lay close together in the mind of the poet. Cæsar is mentioned thrice by name in *Hamlet*, coupled with incidents and language very similar to certain incidents and language in the present play. Cæsar's spirit appears to Brutus, as the ghost did to Hamlet, and speaks to him alone, not to Cassius, who was the enemy and not sympathetic with Cæsar. Brutus is manifestly prepared to see the spirit, since he has already spoken of it: "We all stand up against the spirit of Cæsar," who, similar to Hamlet's father in arms, appears on the battle-field of Philippi. The murder of the man in authority is the theme of both plays. Hamlet and Brutus have a moral and intellectual resemblance; both are tragic, both are avengers, yet the one, the Roman, acts, while the other, the Teuton, hesitates and reflects. Language

and style have many points in common in both plays.

It is worth while to make a short comparison of Shakespeare and Dante, as regards these three great Roman characters, Cæsar, Brutus and Cassius. In essence the English and Italian world-poets agree. To Dante Cæsar occupies the loftiest secular position in history as the founder of the Empire. Shakespeare's view of Cæsar's spirit is not very different — it rules the world, though the individual Cæsar perish. But Dante places Brutus and Cassius in the lowest pit of the Inferno, along with Judas Iscariot, in the mouth of the Devil himself, where they are flayed and champed. How different the manner of Shakespeare; but is his meaning so very different? In both poets they are rebels to the world-order and are tragic; no sentimentality even for the idealist Brutus is shown by either of these great revealers of the divine method of dealing with men.

In another point *Hamlet* and *Julius Cæsar* are quite alike. They are plays which cannot be played in a manner adequate to their conception; both transcend on certain sides the limits of the theater. Cæsar's spirit, as already shown, is the supreme character of the one drama, yet how is that to be represented to the sense of sight on the stage, or even truly suggested? The part of Cæsar is subordinate in the visible play, and is

usually given to a third-rate actor, who butchers Cæsar long before the conspirators can get at him with their daggers. Undoubtedly certain portions are capable of a vivid scenic representation, as the quarrel scene between Cassius and Brutus, and the speech of Antony, while the whole of the drama was written to be played. But Cæsar's spirit can be seen only by spirit. We can often notice Shakespeare thus breaking over the boundaries of the theater, and hinting the new art beyond his art, in which the mind is the boundless stage. *Julius Cæsar* is a good acting-play, but it is a still better reading-play. In fact, unless this were so it could not have its present place in literature.

The Ethical World. — This drama may be said to exhibit the Ethical World of Shakespeare in its highest form as well as in its most accurate gradation. Three typical characters — Cæsar, Cassius, Brutus, to whom Antony may be joined as the fourth — are brought before us participating in the revolution of a great epoch. Domestic life is placed in the background, where, in the person of Portia it shines through the tempest of political strife with a divine beauty. We now behold the Poet rising to the serenest elevation of historical insight, in which the Nation is but a transitory element in the great movement of Universal History.

But here it would be well to enumerate some

of the elements which belong to the Ethical World of Shakespeare. Those most obvious and most commonly recognized are the Individual, the Family and the State. These elements have their limits against one another, hence they fall into conflict, and one must be subordinate to the other — that is, the Individual may assert himself against the demands of Family or State, or the Family may come into collision with the State. It is evident that there must be a gradation of rank in these powers; one must be above another, else strife and confusion will remain forever. But, above all these, there is a fourth principle, which has not the taint of finitude which rests upon the others. For even the State — to which every individual must bow, and every principle apparently must yield, whose absolute supremacy is expressed in the fact that its safety is the highest law — seems, notwithstanding, to be exposed to the might of the destroying angel. The past is strewn with the wrecks of States — the empires of the Orient, Greece, Rome, the Middle Ages, have arisen and passed away; and so we must acknowledge a Power above the State which calls it into being and also puts an end to its existence. What this Power is we need not now discuss — we only wish to recognize and name it. Let us call it the Spirit of the World's History; or, more concisely, the World-Spirit; or, in the language of

religion, God in History. Only let us not imagine that it is some far-off Power, wholly external to man, whose arm descends and smites him to the earth without his knowing whence it cometh or whither it goeth.

Furthermore, all these principles can be vitalized only through the individual. Taken alone, they are mere abstractions, and of no force; but when a man goes forth armed with them, and makes them the basis of his action, they move the world. It is only in this way they can collide and form the foundation of a drama. An individual thus becomes the bearer of some great ethical principle, and can come into conflict with another individual who is fulfilling the same destiny in a different sphere. For instance, a person may assert the right of individual conscience — certainly a valid principle — against the majesty of law, which is the command of the State; or, like Antigone, may prefer duty toward Family to obedience to civil authority; or, finally, there may be a still higher collision—that between the defenders of the State on the one hand, and the supporters of the World-Spirit on the other. Such is the collision between nations struggling for independence and their conquerors—the collision of Carthage with Rome, of the Pole with the Russian, of the Turk with the Greek. We feel for the fallen nation; we may even weep over an heroic people defeated and prostrate. Still, in the end we are compelled

to say: It is just; the World-Spirit, whose right it is to judge the nations, has decided against them.

Now, it is this collision which Shakespeare has mainly presented in *Julius Cæsar*. For Cæsar is the representative of the World-Spirit; he appears upon the stage of History as the destroyer of his country's liberties; hence the great conflict of his life was with the State. It is, indeed, this fact which has caused him to be calumniated by nearly twenty centuries of writers and speakers. But note that Shakespeare does not join in this cry of execration. To him Cæsar's career is not political, but world-historical; not limited to a single State, but having the world as its theater. To him Cæsar stands at the head of that eternal and infinite movement in whose grasp the nations are playthings. But, on the other hand, let us not forget that this movement was nothing external to Rome — it was the movement of Rome herself; the Roman Constitution was sapped perhaps before the birth of Cæsar. He only carried out the unconscious national will; he saw what Rome needed, and possessed the strength to execute it, and this is his greatness — and, in fact the only real political greatness. That one man can overturn the form of government permanently, against the will and spirit of a whole people, is preposterous. That such was not Shakespeare's view is shown by the termination of the play — the con-

spirators are overthrown and the supporters of Cæsar are successful.

The State has also its representatives in this conflict — Cassius and Brutus, especially the former. They were the bearers of the spirit of the old Roman Constitution, and were strong enough to destroy the individual Cæsar, but by no means the movement which he represented. The thought of Cæsar remained, and Octavius simply steps into his place, conquers, and has peace — shuts the temple of Janus for the first time in generations. That is, Cæsar's revolution is accomplished, and the Roman people acquiesce.

The First Act. — With this explanation we may now consider the leading incidents of the First Act, which contain the germs of the action and the characters. The first scene introduces us to the necessary background upon which the whole drama is painted — the Roman people. They are out on a holiday to behold Cæsar. As already indicated, they are the real body of his spirit. They have turned to him and against Pompey, not out of mere fickleness, but because he is their best representative. So they “make a holiday to see Cæsar and to rejoice in his triumph.”

• We hurry into the next scene to find the element which gives consistency and stability to this mass. Here the two great men of the time appear, like gladiators, each fully bent on the destruction of the other. Cæsar has arrived at the summit of

his greatness; he is ready to receive the crown and be called king, whose functions, indeed, he already performs. This fact is to be particularly noted, as it will answer many objections that have been raised against the play. The critics are much troubled because Cæsar does not say or do anything great, and declare that he is inadequately portrayed. But the Poet represents him at the consummation of his deeds, and as the founder of a new order of things; greater he could not well be.

To be sure, a drama might be written which would exhibit Cæsar at an earlier period of his life — in the bloom of his activity, energy, and military genius. But such a drama could never present the collision which Shakespeare intended, nor in the faintest degree exhibit the ethical ideas which lie at the basis of this *Julius Cæsar*; for in the present work it is absolutely necessary that Cæsar, as the representative of the World-Spirit, be assailed and perish, and then that his assailants perish through his living idea. Equally devoid of insight is the reproach of another critic — that Cæsar comes upon the stage only to be slain; for the play assumes Cæsar in the plenitude of his power, and Cæsar truly cannot be slain.

The next fact to be noted is the deep hostility of Cassius to the government of Cæsar. These are the two gladiators who, in this second scene, leap forth stripped for the fight. Cassius is in

ability only inferior to Cæsar, and Cæsar is perfectly aware both of his hatred and of his talents. Cassius is first shown in the play overcoming the scruples of Brutus and alienating him from the party of Cæsar. With what skill does he introduce the subject! with what logical force are all the motives adduced, until Brutus, partly by the most delicate flattery and partly by adroit appeals to his moral nature, is completely won! A further proof of Cassius' ability is that he essayed Brutus first of all, for the name of Brutus was the greatest and most venerable in Rome, going back even to the expulsion of the Roman Kings; and Brutus himself was, perhaps, the most respectable character in Rome, and, consequently, of the greatest influence among his fellow-citizens. With him, the conspiracy might be a success; without him, that was impossible.

In the third scene we have Cassius working upon an altogether different character—Casca. This man is the desperado of the conspirators, a man possessed of the greatest physical courage, but without an iota of moral courage. He will rush upon an enemy and stab him, but turns deathly pale at a clap of thunder. Whatever is human he is ready to meet, but that which he conceives to be divine or supernatural is a source of the direst terror. This man Casca, Cassius must have; no respectable man could have been found who possessed equal audacity. In fact,

every conspiracy or vigilance committee has just such an instrument, whose function it is to do work which no decent man is willing to perform, but which must be done. When we observe that Casca was the first one that stabbed Cæsar, we know exactly where to place him. Cassius needs this man, and it is curious to note with what consummate tact he proceeds. Knowing the weak side of Casca's character to be superstition, he brings all his force to bear upon this single point. There is only one result which can follow—Casca joins the conspiracy.

The Political Man.—Thus far we are all admiration for the intellect of Cassius, but several things have transpired under his direction at which the rigidly moral man must shrug his shoulders. He has, no doubt, taken advantage of the weakness of Brutus and Casca, and deceived them both; he has declared that to be truth which he himself could not have believed, especially to Casca; he has laid a most unrighteous snare for poor Brutus by writing him anonymous letters, which the latter took to be calls from the people; finally, he designs the assassination of a human being—an act which can hardly be justified from any purely moral point of view. Further on in the play we shall find many other deeds of an equally doubtful nature. How, then, is Cassius to be understood? Shall we take the common statement—that this is a case of great intellect

without any moral perceptions? But, if we look at another side, we behold a character of the noblest stamp — of surpassing brightness. With what energy does he strive to restore the old Roman State! with what industry does he collect every fragment of opposition to the mighty Cæsar! with what readiness does he die for his country! To be sure, he knows the might of place and pelf, but he uses them only as instruments for his great design.

There is simply one clue to his conduct. His highest end was the State, and everything which came into conflict with this end had to be subordinated. It was a time of strife and revolution; the ancient landmarks of society were swept away; the prescribed limits of order were obliterated. No man ever saw more clearly than Cassius the finitude, one-sidedness, and inadequacy of the merely moral stand-point in such a period, and, consequently, he proceeded to disregard it entirely. Suppose he did deceive or assassinate a man, provided he thereby saved the State? In fact, what is war but lying, cheating, robbing, and killing for one's country? And the man who can do these things most successfully, and on the most gigantic scale, is the hero — is the great general. To be sure, all this is done to our enemy; but that can be no justification from the moral point of view; the moral obligation lies between fellow-men, and not fellow-countrymen.

When Cassius no longer has this end in view, he is as moral as any man would require — in fact, an exemplary character. His abstinence is especially contrasted with the debauchery of Antony; he is moderate in desires, meager in shape, a great student and observer of men — all of which point to a temperate and steady life.

His chief characteristic, then, is the subordination of moral to political ends. He is the statesman; his thought and activity find their limits in the State; his world is his country. His point of view as regards his duty is hinted by himself: —

— “In such a time as this it is not meet
That every nice offense should bear his comment.”

His reasoning is: To be sure, Lucius Pella has taken bribes, but that offense can by no means be balanced against his services and abilities, or his influence; therefore let it pass, for we need the united efforts of all against the common enemy. A distinguished American officer once expressed this subordination of moral to political duties in the following toast: “My country — may she ever be right; but, right or wrong, my country.” This is, perhaps, only the *feeling* of patriotism; but the insight of Cassius was deeper, for he comprehended *intellectually* that the right of the State is superior to any individual right of conscience, whenever these rights come in collis-

ion. At least the State must assert itself in that way in order to be at all.

The Moral Man. — But the cyclüs of characters, in order to be complete, must have its moral representative. This is Brutus. The Poet has treated this character with such evident delight, has thrown around it such a halo of virtue, that it seems to be the leading one of the play. The honor, sincerity and nobleness of the man, the purity of his motives, his unimpeachable integrity in a corrupt age, the perfect fulfillment of every duty of the citizen, are brought out in their most glowing colors; even his family relations are introduced to crown the moral beauty of his character. All the virtues of private life seem to center in this man; and we may heartily join in the encomium of Antony: —

“ This was the noblest Roman of them all;
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world: This was a man.”

But alack the day! he was called upon, or thought he was called upon, to act in times of revolution, when all the ancient prescribed landmarks were swept down, and when even the clearest and most logical head could scarcely find its way out of the confusion. Now, what does this man, of the keenest sense of honor, of the most truthful nature, proceed to do? First, to desert, and

then to assassinate, his dearest friend. His motive, he says, was the general welfare, but immediately thereafter he declares that Cæsar had as yet done nothing hostile to the public good. And so this contradiction runs through all his acts and sayings. It is evident that he had violated the fundamental principle of his nature — his profoundest intellectual conviction. As far as his insight goes, the act is wrong. Cassius can consistently do such a deed, for his stand-point is the State; and in its preservation everything — men, property, and principles — are to be submerged.

But poor Brutus! what is his next step? He tries to justify the deed. Listen to his soliloquy, for nothing can more completely show the inadequacy of the moral point of view, and it is, besides, a fine specimen of moral reasoning not unknown in our day:—

“It must be by his death; and for my part
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. He would be crowned;
How that might change his nature, there’s the question.”

It would seem that he was not aware of the great change which had actually taken place in the Roman Constitution, and does not know that the formal coronation of Cæsar would produce no alteration in the real condition of things. This fatal lack of all political sagacity in the leader

would destroy any party or any cause. To continue:—

“It is the bright day that brings forth the adder,
And that craves wary walking. Crown him — that,
And then I grant we put a sting in him
That at his will he *may* do danger with.”

Possibility is here made the basis of action. That all practical wisdom is based on directly the opposite principle need hardly be stated. Moreover, all crimes can easily be justified in this way, since a man has only to plead some indefinite possibility:—

“The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
Remorse from power; and, to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affection swayed
More than his reason.”

From this it would appear that Brutus thought that Cæsar was still a good man and unworthy of death. It was only what Cæsar might become that can furnish any defense for the deed:—

—“But ’tis a common proof
That lowliness is young ambition’s ladder
Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the topmost round
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend; so *Cæsar may*.
Then, lest he *may*, prevent.”

Possibility is again announced as the basis of action. The logical nature of this category is

not very difficult of comprehension. In the Possible the Real and the Unreal are not yet differentiated; therefore it cannot have any determination. But action is something determined, and, since the Possible has no such element in itself, the subjective mind alone can make the necessary determination. Everything is possible, and just as well impossible. Who is to determine? Only the individual, and he must also act on this determination. Thus subjectivity asserts its absolute validity, and this is what is meant by the subjective or moral point of view, which in this play is represented by Brutus, whom we have already named the moral Egoist.

—“And since the quarrel
Will bear no color for the thing he is,”

(what he now is cannot justify our act — another declaration that Cæsar had as yet done nothing which merited death,)

“Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented
Would run to these and these extremities;
And, therefore, think him as the serpent’s egg,
Which, hatched, would as its kind grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.”

If you cannot find a real crime, draw on your imagination and you are sure to discover one. It will be noticed that in the foregoing soliloquy no charge is made against any act of Cæsar’s. And yet the world has generally held that it is

not moral perversity which utters these declarations — nay, that it is moral greatness.

What, then, is the matter? *Brutus is not able to subordinate the various spheres of ethical duty when they come in conflict.* He recognizes them all, to be sure, but not in their true limitations. Hence, when they collide with one another, he becomes a mass of confusion, strife, and contradiction in spite of philosophical culture. Herein lies his immeasurable inferiority to Cassius, who clearly comprehends these limitations and acts upon them. It is intellectual weakness — the inability to rise out of merely moral considerations in political affairs. The trouble is with Brutus' head — not his heart. He intends to do the right thing, only he does not do it. He acts not so much in opposition to, as outside of, his real intellectual convictions; for mark! he is not all inwardly convinced by his own specious reasonings. He gets beyond his intellectual sphere — is befogged and lost.

So, after all, we see that intellect is necessary to the highest moral action. We have had much talk of late concerning the cultivation of the intellect to the neglect of morality. But it seems that Shakespeare has here contrasted these two sides of human nature in the most effective manner, decidedly to the disadvantage of the latter. For Brutus is a man of intense moral susceptibility, yet of small mental caliber; the result is that

his mistakes and (what is worse) his transgressions are appalling. Shakespeare has thus illustrated a truth which it will do no hurt to repeat nowadays — that the content of a moral act can be given only by intelligence, and that the cultivation of intellect is in so far the cultivation of morality in its true sense. On this side our public schools are our best — and, indeed, are fast becoming our only — moral teachers. To be sure, submission does not always follow insight; men often know the right, but do it not. Still, we can hardly ascribe this to their knowing it, nor should we assert that they were better off if they had not known it. For in the one case there is a possibility of their becoming good men; but, if they have no comprehension of the good, it is impossible.

In ordinary times of civil repose, we should say of Brutus: What a noble citizen! No one could be more ready to fulfill his duties to his family, to his fellow-men, and to his country. But it must be recollected that these duties were the prescribed usages, customs, and beliefs of his nation; they were given to him — transmitted from his ancestors. But, when prescription no longer points out the way, such a man must fall, for he has no intellectual basis of action. Still, the morality of mankind in general is prescriptive, and does not rest upon rational insight; they follow the footsteps of their fathers. Hence it is

that most people think that Brutus is the real hero of the play, and that it is wrongly named. But this was certainly not Shakespeare's design, for it was very easy to construct a drama in which Brutus should appear as triumphant by having it terminate at the assassination of Cæsar, with a grand flourish of daggers, frantic proclamations of liberty, and "*sic semper tyrannis.*" Shakespeare, however, takes special pains not to do any such thing, but to show the triumph of Cæsar's thought in the destruction of the conspirators. Still, Brutus remains the favorite character with the highly respectable class of people who do not, and can not, rise above his stand-point, and to-day he is often taken as the great prototype of all lovers of liberty.

The effect of intellectual weakness combined with strong moral impulses appears, then, to be the meaning of this character. It is amazing to observe its contradictions and utter want of steadiness of purpose; nor are they at all exaggerated by the Poet. This man, who could assassinate his best friend for the public good, cannot, when a military leader, conscientiously levy contributions for his starving soldiers; "for," says he, "I can raise no money by vile means." That is, he would sacrifice that very cause, for which he committed the greatest crime known to man, to a moral punctilio. This may be moral heroism, but it is colossal stupidity. Furthermore,

in every instance in which Cassius and he differed about the course to be pursued, Brutus was in the wrong. He, out of moral scruples, saved Antony, against the advice of Cassius; this same Antony afterwards destroyed their army and with it their cause. Moreover, the battle of Philippi, the fatal termination of the conflict, was fought in disregard of the judgment of Cassius. And, finally, as already noted, he dies with a contradiction upon his lips, for he says that Cato was a coward for committing suicide, and then declares that he will never be taken captive to Rome alive, and shortly afterwards falls upon his own sword.

Perhaps, however, he came to the conclusion that his country needed his death, for he said in his celebrated speech: "I have the same dagger [which slew Cæsar] for myself when it shall please my country to need my death." This oft-quoted and favorite sentence seems to be usually regarded as expressing the very quintessence of moral sublimity and heroic self-sacrifice. But one naturally asks who is to be judge whether his country needs his death — the country or himself? If the country, then he would be a criminal publicly condemned, and there would be no necessity for his dagger, since his country would furnish him both instrument and executioner free of charge. But, if he was to be the judge himself, why did he commit such villainous

acts that, in his own opinion, his country needed his death? All this was intentional, no doubt, on the part of Shakespeare, for it comports too well with the contradictory character of Brutus to admit of any other supposition. One imagines that if the old bard could have foreseen all the frothy vaporings and mock-sentimentality to which this innocent absurdity has given rise, he would still be laughing in his grave. Such is the true irony of the great Poet, so much insisted on by some critics, which portrays the finitude of individuals, classes, and even whole historical periods, so adequately that they themselves take delight in the picture.

This difference in character between Brutus and Cassius must lead to a collision, and accordingly we have the celebrated quarrel in the Fourth Act. Here we see the respective stand-points of the two men fully exhibited. Brutus is haughty, insulting; he plumes himself upon his moral integrity, though it seems that he was ready to take — indeed he asked for — some of the money which Cassius had raised by “vile means.” Cassius, on the contrary, keeps restraining himself, though exasperated in the highest degree, and ultimately leads the way to reconciliation. No personal feelings can dim to his eye the great end which he has in view; nothing must be allowed to put it in jeopardy. Hence the quarrel, which would otherwise doubtless have terminated

their friendship, if not have ended in a personal encounter, is healed as speedily as possible. There is a mightier collision pending which hushes all lesser strifes.

The non-moral man.—A further contrast to Brutus is Antony. This loose reveler is true to his friend, Cæsar, and avenges him, but the rigid moralist abandons and slays him. Antony is, moreover, a man of pleasure, and acts from impulse; Brutus pretends to be a philosopher and to be guided by fixed principles. “I am no orator, as Brutus is, but a plain, blunt man, that love my friend.” Antony’s highest end was personal devotion to one whom he loved; he in no wise comprehends the movement of either Cassius or Cæsar. Thus both Antony and Brutus are quite on the same spiritual plane, and, for this reason, Antony can justly reproach Brutus for his faithless conduct with a cogency which the latter can by no means answer:—

“Witness the hole you made in Cæsar’s heart
Crying *long live, hail Cæsar!*”

Yet Antony does most ample justice to the motive of Brutus, and seems to place all worthiness of an action in the motive—a point of view, it need hardly be said, purely moral and subjective:—

“This was the noblest Roman of them all;
All the conspirators, save only he,
Did what they did in envy of great Cæsar;
He only in a general honest thought
And common good to all made one of them.”

These lines are often quoted as Shakespeare's actual opinion of Brutus; but they are spoken by Antony, to whom they appropriately belong, and to nobody else. It is by no means certain that Shakespeare's own views are to be found always in the utterances of his characters. The dramatic Poet expresses his convictions in the action, in the collision, and, above all, in the catastrophe. Judging by this standard, we should most decidedly aver that the above lines did not express Shakespeare's personal opinion. Both Antony and Brutus, therefore, have quite the same intellectual stand-point, though differing much in their outward lives; but the one was true to it, the other was not. Brutus ought to have acted as Antony, to be faithful to his deepest convictions, and ought to have remained friendly—or, at least, indifferent—to Cæsar. Cassius alone can intellectually slay Cæsar.

Antony's eloquence is, therefore, kindled by his love of the individual Cæsar, not by his knowledge of the universal Cæsar. This is what brings him into touch with the people, who want strong passion for their hearts and particular facts for their heads—not cold abstract reasonings about principles. His wonderful skill does not spring from premeditation, but from his feeling of oneness with the people and with Cæsar, who are themselves one in spirit. We easily catch that Antony's eloquence is passion-

ate, sensuous, particular; he deals not with the universal, but with the individual. Yet in his details of feeling and incident, the principle lies ensconced, and is taken up by his hearers. The rent robe of Cæsar, the victory over the Nervii, the testament, the strong personal appeals, all are particulars which hold the universal Cæsar and send him unconsciously, but with a burning energy, into the hearts of the people, who, being on fire themselves, are now ready to set the city on fire. Antony makes them feel, by that last testament, that they are Cæsar's heirs, and must at once proceed to act by taking possession of their inheritance.

On this side of his character Antony is the irony of Brutus; the immoral man is the faithful one, the masker and reveler is not the hypocrite and betrayer. In speech also Antony is the irony of Brutus, who "is an honorable man," which I am not. Yet Antony recognizes the worth of moral subordination, and appreciates Brutus and not Cassius, when both are dead. Antony and Brutus have their stand-point essentially in morality, yet the one follows it and the other does not, in their daily conduct of life.

Here lies the tragedy of Antony, not to be unfolded in the present play. As he knows not the universal Cæsar, he cannot be the bearer of Cæsar's idea. As he practices not moral subor-

dination, he becomes the victim of his passions. He is not the true heir of Cæsar, for he will throw down Cæsar's inheritance at the feet of an Oriental enchantress. Antony was reputed to be a descendant of Hercules; he is a Hercules of mighty prowess, but with the shirt of Nessus poisoning him, sent by a woman. Thus both Antony and Brutus break upon a common tragic limit, but from opposite directions; Brutus is the tragedy of morality, Antony is the tragedy of immorality.

A short survey. — There are three leading moments in Cæsar's career: First, Cæsar in the consummation of his world-historical deed — on the pinnacle of his power and glory; second, the reaction of the State against him, headed by Cassius; third, the overcoming of this reaction through the restoration and absolute validity of the Cæsarean movement. Hence we see that Cæsar is the real hero, and that the piece is justly entitled *Julius Cæsar*. We also see that the collision is essentially between the World-Spirit and the Nation, and that in this struggle four typical characters participate, forming a complete cyclus of characterization. Cæsar represents the world-historical stand-point, Cassius the political, Brutus the moral, Antony the non-moral. Cæsar perishes; the ancient national sentiment rises up for a moment and destroys the individual, for, being of flesh and blood, an assas-

sin may rush upon him and stab him to the heart — but his thought is not thus doomed to perish. Next to him comes Cassius, whose great mistake was that he still had faith in his country — a pardonable error, if any, to mortals! He did not, and perhaps could not, rise above the purely political point of view; to him the State was the ultimate ethical principle of the Universe. Hence he did not comprehend the world-historical movement represented by Cæsar, but collided with it and was destroyed. He is, indeed, a painful, deeply tragic character; with all his greatness, devotion, and intelligent activity — still finite and short-sighted. The mistake of Brutus is that he had anything to do with the matter at all — that he took a part — or, at least, a leading part — in this revolution. The collision lay wholly beyond his mental horizon; hence he represents nothing objective — is the bearer of no greatest ethical principle, like Cæsar and Cassius. He represents his own Ego. He presumed to lead where he was intellectually in total darkness, trusting alone to his good intentions. We do not blame him because he was ignorant, but because he did not know that he was ignorant. Every rational being must at least comprehend its own limits — must know that it does not know. We may laud the motive, but lament the deed; still, man, as endowed with Reason and Universality, cannot run away from his act

and hide himself behind his intention, but must take the inherent consequences of his deed in their total circumference. Antony stands outside of all these characters — world-historical, political, moral, yet he strangely touches them all.

Brutus is, no doubt, the sphinx of the play, and has given much trouble to critics on account of the contradictions of his character. He seems both moral and immoral — to be actuated by the noblest motives for the public good, yet can give no rational ground for his act. Indeed, we are led to believe that his vanity was so swollen by the flattery of Cassius that it hurried him unconsciously beyond the pale of his convictions. Still, Brutus was undoubtedly a good citizen, a good husband, and a good man. But any one of these three relations may come into conflict with the others. Which, then, is to be followed? If a man has not subordinated these spheres into a system — which can be done only by Intelligence — he cannot tell what course to pursue. Sometimes he may follow one, sometimes another, for in his mind they all possess equal validity. Hence such a person can only be inconsistent, vacillating, and contradictory in his actions; and such a person was Brutus — a good, moral man, who recognized all duties, but he did not comprehend their limitations, and hence, fell beneath their conflict.

Structure.—The dramatic organism is simple, and marked, yet with its limbs well covered with living tissue. A little dissection, however, will reveal the joints on which the action turns and moves. The whole sweep of the play lies between the triumph of the individual Cæsar over the Roman Republic and the triumph of the universal Cæsar in the success of the Triumvirate. The spirit of the old Roman Constitution rises up for a moment from its death-throes and stabs the man Cæsar, but his idea, as the world-historical principle of that age, cannot be destroyed. The Triumvirate, however, is but a transitional stage in the change from Republicanism to Imperialism — a change which will be fully accomplished in the following play of *Antony and Cleopatra*. There the principle of Cæsar is firmly established, unaided by the mighty individual Cæsar.

This thought of the whole play in the most natural manner organizes itself into two symmetrical parts or movements, the one of which portrays the struggle with the man Cæsar, the other with the spirit Cæsar. The first movement, accordingly, unfolds the internal conflict at Rome — the Republican conspiracy against the Imperial autocrat; it carries the action forward to the death of Cæsar, and shows his idea taking its new body in the Roman People by means of the eloquence of Antony, and driving the conspirators from the city. The second movement is the external con-

flict, as it reveals itself outside of Rome ; it shows Cæsar's idea taking possession of the Roman Empire, and finishing its work at the battle of Philippi. Thus the whole world submits to Cæsar's spirit. In such manner the dramatic organism is seen to be the Idea realizing itself in its two supreme phases: Cæsar as individual, and Cæsar as universal — or the mortal man and the immortal principle.

Through both these movements, which divide the play crosswise as it were, nearly in the middle, run two threads which divide the play lengthwise, being made up of the two opposing parties. The one thread is that of Cæsar and his adherents, to whom the People must be added; the other thread is that of Brutus and Cassius, with their adherents. Around these central figures all the other characters may be grouped. Thus the two threads exhibit the political collision, which is the paramount one of the play.

Still, in a subordinate manner, a domestic strand is woven into each of these threads, by Calphurnia, the wife of Cæsar, and by Portia, the wife of Brutus. The domestic element, however, is but a by-play in the total action; in *Julius Cæsar* it has not the importance which is given to it in *Coriolanus*, where it is the mediating principle of the entire drama; nor the importance which is given to it in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where it is one of the chief colliding principles.

The structure of the play is, accordingly, quite the same as those of Shakespeare's tragedies. Moreover the first movement is by all means the fuller and stronger and more interesting of the two movements. To the end of the Third Act the organization and the action are complete; but the Fourth and Fifth Acts drop back in concentration and expression, in spite of the excellence of single scenes, as the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius, and of single passages. The same thing is true of the poet's greatest works — *Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*. The reason seems to be that he unfolds his idea in his first movement, while in the second he simply carries out to a result that idea. Shakespeare's and the reader's interest is in the idea; when this is fully known and developed, the rest follows as a matter of course.

We may use other terms to express these movements in *Julius Cæsar*. We may call them the rise and the fall, the action and re-action; but, under any circumstances, we must note the continued sweep of the conspiracy upwards on the wave of success till it reaches a state of frenzied intoxication in the scene just after the death of Cæsar. Then a moment's lull: do you hear that rap? *Enter a servant*: he comes from Antony and the re-action has begun. A little later we read: *Enter Antony*; the revolution of the wheel descends slowly and then more rapidly till the end. The division should be noticed: that servant

of Antony enters just at the middle of the play, the upward turn and the downward turn are about of the same length. Cæsar is inactive and helpless till slain, then he becomes wonderfully active and knows how to help himself; and death itself in him is only ironical in its seriousness.

Symbolism.—This is an excellent play for studying Shakespeare's poetic symbolism. The poet is true to the fact, yet out of the fact flashes an ideal meaning. The genuine symbol in Art adheres to the vivid Particular, but always therein brings home the Universal. It has the material side, but the material bears the superscription of the spiritual; the finite must be present in the symbol, but is so transformed that it goes beyond itself and suggests the infinite.

Symbolism is not personification, in which some abstract quality is made to do the work of a person. Still, in this play Shakespeare employs personification with great power, as we see in this passage:—

O Conspiracy,

Sham'st thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,
When evils are most free? O then by day
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, Conspiracy—

Here the poet is consciously personifying, yet with such a strong current of feeling, that we are swept along without thinking of the somewhat artificial figure. Likewise there is personification

in the passage: "Danger knows full that Cæsar is more dangerous than he."

Symbolism is not allegory, which is the putting of one particular for another particular, as for example, a lion for a man, who roars "in the Capitol."

But symbolism is the raising of the particular into its universal significance. A most common mistake is to confound symbolism and allegory, between which there are important differences. In allegory form and meaning fall asunder, while in symbolism form and meaning are fused together into one stream flowing from the poet's imagination.

The symbolism in *Julius Cæsar* is of various kinds. First, we may note the grand symbolic use of Nature seen in the tempest of the First Act (Scene Third). "Earth shakes like a thing unfirm," but the deeper fact is, the institutional world is shaking, and the physical tempest images the spiritual tempest, as is the case in *Lear*. Then the conduct of Cassius in the storm is symbolic; he "bared his bosom to the thunder-stone," and presented himself "in the very aim and flash" of the lightning—which expresses not only his physical relation to the storm, but his spiritual relation to the time. Events which we may call symbolic, being laden with suggestion far beyond themselves, occur everywhere: the drizzled blood upon the Capitol, Cæsar lying at

the base of Pompey's statue in his gore, the Conspirator Casca pointing with his sword incidentally at the Capitol, where "the sun arises." Then we have the attempt to pervert the true interpretation of the symbol, on the part of Decius, who twists Calphurnia's dream to suit his own personal purpose, and through his perversion brings Cæsar to the Capitol for slaughter.

Indeed the whole sweep of the play, as already unfolded, is a symbol, showing the particular man, Cæsar, transfigured into the spiritual Cæsar. He is an individual, and therein a symbol, being elevated to the universal in his true meaning. Thus the reader must cultivate a double vision—an outer for the fact, and an inner for the spirit. Poetry is not merely ideal, not merely real, but a complete harmony and interpenetration of the ideal and the real. If its two sides fall asunder, we invariably witness two false tendencies in art, namely, the idealistic and the realistic.

Irony. — This is the last topic we shall consider, as it is the last and most subtle quality of the present play, as well as the most difficult thing to be rightly understood. It requires time, and perhaps age to pluck this final fruit of Shakespearian study. Youth ordinarily flings itself into the immediate sensuous impression and is carried away by the mighty sentences, the grand imagery and eloquence of the drama.

But maturer years feel the counterstroke in such an unreserved surrender, and take a deeper glance. The result is that the suspicion sometimes darts across the mind that the poet himself rises above the conflicts which he depicts, and has his own furtive smile at his characters, as well as at his readers.

Irony is a very subtle element in the play, and takes many forms; it enters not only style but character, and even events. It may be conscious or unconscious in the man who utters it; that is, it may spring from intention, or from a total want of all sense of itself in the person speaking, who goes to pieces in his own words. It fluctuates from playful banter to bitter satire, from kindly effervescence to a destructive overflow. So elusive is this irony at times that it requires a special effort, possibly a special gift to catch it, and to distinguish it from earnestness. The reader may well doubt in some passages what this lambent play of uncertain flashes in the dim distance means. Often again it is as plain as lightning blinding the eyes, and this lightning may strike a person and kill, without his knowing it.

What is irony? It is hard to constrain in the limits of a definition, inasmuch as it, by its very nature has the tendency to break over limits, and be something different. Thus the definition may become the irony of itself. The sport of

earnestness and the earnestness of sport; the shadow of self-contradiction which is thrown from all finite men and things; irony in its full sweep may be called the dialectic of this terrestrial existence. Whatever may be said or done casts a strange image of its opposite, which is the ghostly counterpart; the one side always projects some vision of the other side, often sudden, fleeting, hard to hold in thought. The irony of the world is a kind of demonic phantom, pursuing the real, overtaking the same at last, and then making itself the real. *Julius Cæsar* is supremely Shakespeare's play of irony. We shall try to catch and hold some of its forms sporting elusively and teasingly before us — those that come within reach of our finger-ends.

1. We find many passages in which the irony is intended by the speaker. Notably the whole speech of Antony whirls and turns upon an ironical line as a pivot: —

For Brutus is an honorable man.

Here just the opposite is intended so plainly that even the multitude can catch the irony. Cassius also uses irony, particularly to Brutus and concerning Brutus: —

Well, honor is the subject of my story.

Wherein we feel a touch that honor is not the subject of his story, but something quite differ-

ent, since Cassius cares little for the fine scruples of Brutus, but will speak of honor to please him, and take that way of winning him for the cause.

2. Then we mark in many passages the unconscious irony of the speaker. This is particularly the case with the discourse of Brutus, who has no sense of irony, while Cassius and Antony have such a sense keenly in contrast to him. It makes many of Brutus' sayings hard to understand, for the most difficult passages in the drama drop from the mouth of Brutus, inasmuch as he is full of contradiction, full of the opposite of what he both says and does. Still he is serious all the while. In our first introduction to him he declares

If it be aught toward the general good,
Set honor in one eye and death in the other,
And I will look on both indifferently.

Wherein he seems to say that honor and death are quite the same or equally indifferent to him; but we hear the unconscious contradiction in the next lines.

For let the Gods so speed me as I love
The name of honor more than I fear death.

What is the solution of the riddle? Commentators cry corruption and try to mend the passage with their own conjectures, or seek by ingenious shifts to harmonize the two statements.

But thus they destroy the poet's character of Brutus, which has in it just this contradiction; it shows everywhere unconsciously both in word and deed this self-dissolving irony.

We may take another passage — it is from his speech before the People — which is cited by Gervinus and others in dead earnest as the height of the moral sublime: “With this I depart; that, as I slew my best lover (friend) for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself when it shall please my country to need my death.” We have already looked somewhat fully into this declaration of Brutus, but its absurdity is seen at a glance; it is self-destroying not only in fact but in thought: “I shall kill myself for the good of my country.” This is surely irony, innocent on the part of Brutus, but intended by the poet.

The final self-contradiction of Brutus, ending logically in self-destruction is the scene where Brutus first asserts, then denies his philosophy. Cassius also is caught in the same sweep of irony, and makes the same denial of philosophy, yet he is conscious of it, for he says: “I now do change.” But the whole character of Brutus has this element of unconscious irony woven through it from beginning to end. In what he says and does really lies the very opposite of what he says and does. He cannot see his own contradiction, for he, though a student and philosopher, is any-

thing but a clear-headed man. His words eat themselves, his thought had committed suicide many times before he committed suicide in fact. His death is but his final and complete act of irony.

3. Not only in single characters but in entire scenes we find this irony running through the dialogue. Thus it sweeps into its current a whole group of men. This is the explanation of the strange conduct of the conspirators just after Cæsar's murder: —

Cinna. Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!
Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.

Cassius. Some to the common pulpits and cry out
Liberty! Freedom! and Enfranchisement!

Brutus. Stoop, Romans, stoop!
And let us bathe our hands in Cæsar's blood,
Up to the elbows and besmear our swords;
Then walk we forth, even to the market place
And waving our red weapons o'er our heads,
Let's all cry Peace, Freedom, and Liberty!

Cassius. Stoop then and wash! — How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted o'er
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

Brutus. How many times shall Cæsar bleed in sport
That now on Pompey's basis lies along
No worthier than the dust!

Cassius: So oft as that shall be
So often shall the knot of us be called
The men that gave their country liberty.

This shows unquestionably the beastly intoxication of a terrible deed, which comes over those

who have done it. But the irony of the whole thing! They are not doing what they think they are — rather the opposite. Hark! who comes here? Enter a servant — a messenger of Antony's. The beginning has begun, the grand sobering-up starts, continuing till death. Instead of overthrowing, they will confirm Cæsar's power. But what shall we say to Cassius in this passage? Does he not set-off the extravagant and theatrical conduct of Brutus with a spice of irony or even of burlesque? Does he not throw a humorous side-light upon the present play by alluding to "this our lofty scene acted o'er in states unborn and accents yet unknown?" Brutus is in earnest, but Cassius, as we read him, is slyly but consciously ironical. How can he help it? The time itself has become one huge play of irony.

Another passage we shall consider — the last and concerning what is the last. Brutus and Cassius have met just before the battle of Philippi, while the squadrons are getting into line, and the two talk together:—

Brutus. And whether we shall meet again I know not,
Therefore our everlasting farewell take!
Forever and forever farewell, Cassius!
If we do meet again, why we shall smile;
If not, why then this parting was well made.

A serious and effusive farewell on the part of Brutus in spite of that smile, which is uncon-

scious. But the smile becomes conscious in the answer of Cassius, with the inevitable little spray of irony, which dashes the sentiment somewhat:--

Cassius. Forever and forever farewell, Brutus!
If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed!
If not, 'tis true, this parting was well made.

4. There is a fourth kind of irony, the one playing into the world-order, which often seems to be going one way, while really moving in the opposite way. Destiny is usually a double-dealer; what appears to forestall it, in reality furthers it; when it says one thing on the outside, it means another on the inside; man in his free-will tries to put checks upon it, but these checks turn out the very means of its accomplishment. This is what we sometimes call the Irony of Fate, in which irony rises out of its conscious or unconscious play in the individual man, out of its momentary sport with a group of men, and becomes a mode of energy in the supreme order, in the World's History. It is still at work in individuals, who are free, but it also hovers over them, and rules them in its own way in opposition to all their high and even good aims, bringing forth its own purpose. This is really the irony of Providence, which is the better name as well as the truer conception, but we shall adhere to the more common designation.

It is seen in the case of Julius Cæsar himself — the Individual seeking to expand himself to the Universal, when the little puff-ball, Cæsar the Little, is pricked with the point of a dagger, and then behold the collapse. The Irony of Fate has done its work with Cæsar; now it starts to do its work with the conspirators, who think they have slain an idea when they have assassinated the individual. “Just the opposite,” cries Irony, “you have only freed it of its dross,” and therewith the conspirators feel their own daggers’ edge in the hands of Irony. Cassius, who flatters Brutus into the conspiracy by exaggerating his importance, and then has to take him at his own estimate, be overruled by him and thus be destroyed by the very man whom he (Cassius) has really destroyed, receives a visit from this providential Irony, who always helps the conspirators to ruin themselves. And Brutus, from beginning to end, with his moral scruples turning to immoral deeds, is the plaything of Irony, who has such wild sport with finite man.

Yet out of all this ironical sport two things stand forth intact, or, rather, are brought forth and purified. The first is the Ethical Order of the World, which simply uses Irony as its instrument, must use the same, if man is to have his free deed. Irony gives to him this freedom of action, even if wrong and perverted, and lets it

run its complete round and destroy itself. Irony thus is a necessary form in which the freedom of the individual, being finite, manifests itself in the providential order, being infinite.

The second object we see peering out of this play of Irony is the face of the poet, with a look as firm as adamant, yet wreathed in an arabesque of furtive smiles. How can he restrain his humor? How can he fail to enjoy his own creations? Even with their weaknesses he shows a strong sympathy, but he has no false sentiment which spares the individual in violation of the world-order.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

The personal link which connects this play with *Julius Cæsar* is specially Antony. His life is now to be carried out to its end, and Plutarch is to furnish the materials. His tragedy is that of love, sensuous love, to which he sacrifices the world—a third of it literally, all of it potentially. Can we find the germ of this character and of what it became, in *Julius Cæsar*, though the latter play antedates *Antony and Cleopatra* six or seven years?

A little inspection will show us that already in *Julius Cæsar* Antony had not subordinated his sensuous impulse to his moral nature. He was a seeker of pleasure under many forms; he turned outwardly for entertainment, having little or none within himself. He was a man of action; but when action ceased, he was a man of self-indulgence. He was not a thinker, he had not trained himself to a moral ideal; he was herein the contrast to Brutus. In fact, Brutus had too much of that of which Antony had too little, namely, moral Egoism, which is very necessary up to a certain point, being the principle of conscience.

The result is, Antony has no inner hold upon himself, no true independence of character. He is always clinging to somebody and his master is outside of him. First we see him devoted to Cæsar, and to Cæsar's friends; this devotion, however, is more a personal matter than a conviction. Then he was from the beginning the victim of women. Fulvia evidently ruled him with a rod of iron — through her strong mind; Cleopatra ruled him mightily through her sensuous attractions. He has no self-commanding moral nature; in consequence of this defect he is certain at last to be dominated by somebody. Very naturally he sinks to the lowest master, his own passions.

Undoubtedly Antony knows of the higher principle; he has struggles, intense struggles with himself, but the man in him is always beaten. Having no self-determining moral center, he goes to pieces at last. He has himself described the process:—

Antony. Eros, thou yet beholdest me?

Eros. Ay, noble lord.

Antony. Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish,
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,
A towered citadel, a pendent rock,
A forked mountain or blue promontory,
With trees upon it, that nod unto the world
And mock our eyes with air; thou hast seen these
signs.—

They are black vesper's pageants.

Eros. Ay, my lord.

Antony. That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns and makes it indistinct
As water is in water.

Eros. It does, my lord.

Antony. My good knave Eros, now thy captain is
Even such a body. Here I am Antony,
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my knave.

According to his own statement, he is but a dissolving appearance ; of what is substantial and permanent he does not partake. And this is the fact about him ; with all his heroism, with all his noble traits, he had never attained a true individuality ; his career is only a splendid streak of nothingness. He lacks the adamant Ego, which can subject to itself the entire world of appearance. At this point we observe that he is not the man fitted for his time. Rome and all her conquered peoples have reached the stage where they can be held and ruled only by such an adamant Ego, which is able, first of all, to control itself, and then to control the world. Thereof the incarnation is Octavius. It is no wonder, that in his presence, Antony's demon, "thy spirit which keeps thee," is overpowered. This might is not Cæsar's luck, but a power which draws its strength from the primitive sources of things.

In addition to this personal side in Antony's character, there is a political side, which makes him very different from a love-hero who presents no historic element, like Romeo. Certain writers

would have us believe that Shakespeare's interest in the characters portrayed even in these Histories, is purely psychological. Then they were no true historical plays. Antony is this person, but he is also a political tendency of his time and country ; Antony is Antony, but he is also Rome, or a phase thereof. So Cleopatra is Cleopatra, but also Egypt. The personal and political elements make up the character, just as the personal and political elements make up the play. In any complete analysis of the characters or of the play as a whole, both these elements are to be taken into account. Let us first glance at the political movement of the time.

Rome had conquered the world. The stern spirit of the Republic could suffer no limitations ; it was impelled by an irresistible impulse to reduce to its sway all the nations of the globe. Whatever was not Roman had no right to be ; existence could only be purchased by submission to the Roman principle and by adoption of Roman institutions. The national spirit which gradually arose in the small hamlet along the banks of the Tiber was simply illimitable ; hence it sought to sweep away the boundaries of nations, and could be satisfied only by the absorption of all other peoples. Assimilation was its strongest and most abiding principle ; the world must become Roman. It is this colossal strength and intensity of nationality which gives to Rome her eternal

charm and inspiration. But just here, too, we must look for the one-sidedness and imperfection of her deeds and character. Though the Romans, of all peoples that have ever existed, were the most intensely national, their whole career is, on the other hand, but one continued assault upon nationality; in the conquest of other countries they were logically destroying their own principle.

Hence, when the world was subdued, republican Rome was no more; when she had obliterated the bounds of nationality she had obliterated herself. The process is manifest; the conquered peoples which were incorporated into her life changed her character; the world absorbed Rome quite as much as Rome absorbed the world. Not captive Greece alone captured her conqueror, as a Roman poet sings, but all other conquered States assisted. Hence she was changed—was no longer Rome; she could not extend her conquests—her republican vitality was gone. Thus we pass to the Empire, whose chief destiny will be, not to conquer, but to hold together; not to bring about an external addition of territory, but an internal organization of the numerous nations, and their consolidation through laws and institutions.

Now, it is just this transition from republican to imperial Rome which Shakespeare has made the subject of two of his greatest historical dramas.

The theme is not merely national, but world-historical—in it the whole world participates; for it was then under the sway of Rome, except an outlying circle of unhistorical peoples. On the plains of Pharsalia the old system of things was permanently overthrown; the Empire was essentially established in the complete supremacy of one man. This first phase of the conflict, which ends in the triumph of Julius Cæsar, is not given by the Poet, though it would almost seem as if he had entertained some such design. The struggle with Pompey is always hovering in the historical foreground, and the party of Pompey is one of the colliding elements in both these later Roman plays. The life of Julius Cæsar, of which such a small portion is given in the drama of that name, would thus be exhibited in its full development and show the greatest exploits of the hero. Other slight indications might be pointed out which lead to the same inference; still, it would be rashness to assert positively that Shakespeare ever intended to complete the missing link. As it is, the Cæsarean Trilogy is a matter of conjecture, and we may be well content to accept the two dramas which have come down to us upon this subject.

The play which goes by the name of *Julius Cæsar* presupposes the hero as having attained the summit of his power and glory; he is really the sole supreme authority in the State, though a formal

recognition to this effect has not yet been embodied in the laws and institutions of the country. The crown is offered to him, but he hesitates. Now the embers of the old republican spirit of Rome begin to glow anew; the supporters of Cæsar's old antagonist are not idle. The result is a conflict between imperialism and republicanism — between the new and the old. Brutus and, pre-eminently, Cassius stand as the representatives of the ancient Roman constitution; they succeed in assassinating the autocrat, and seem for a moment almost to have won. But they, in their turn, fall before the reaction — the principle of Cæsar, even without his personal guidance and prestige, is far stronger than the old Roman principle. The Triumvirs, his friends and supporters, avenge his death; republican Rome is defeated by her own citizens; the Cæsarean movement is restored, and will now pass on to its complete realization.

Such, in general, is the collision in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*. It is clear that the play does not give the full solution of this great world-historical problem; the Triumvirate was but a brief phase of the transition to imperialism. The three must be reduced to one; such is the tendency of the world. It is logically impossible that this neutral order of things should endure. Hence another drama becomes necessary in order to portray the completion of the movement. That drama is *Antony and Cleopatra*, whose

theme is, therefore, the reduction of the Triumvirate to the Empire. The principle of Rome was stated to be the assimilation of nations; hence it cannot suffer itself to be divided into three, or even two, nations. The intimate connection — not only of thought, but also of treatment — between *Julius Cæsar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* has often been observed, though the two plays are separated some years in time of composition; incidents, motives, characters, are often merely touched upon in the former play in order to prepare for their full development in the latter play.

The material is very large and almost unwieldy, and it will aid us in obtaining a complete survey of the whole subject, if the various collisions, both of State and Family, are pointed out separately. These constitute the basis of every dramatic action, and are always the pivotal points of interest and development. In the play of *Antony and Cleopatra* they are, in general, the following: First, is the collision between Rome and the yet unconquered portion of the world. It is still the glimmer of that spirit of conquest which shone with such intensity throughout the life of the old republic. But now it has become feeble and unimportant, though by no means extinct; the Poet has given to it only one short scene, besides several allusions scattered through the drama. Indeed, the Roman generals dare not conquer too much, on account of

the envy of their superiors; the zeal of the soldier is quenched in the fear of degradation. Thus Ventidius is afraid of winning too great military glory by his defeat of the Parthians. The second collision is within the Roman Empire — between the Triumvirate and the younger Pompey. Here we behold another renewal of the struggle, which was temporarily ended on the plains of Pharsalia, and which was rekindled by Brutus and Cassius, to be again extinguished on the plains of Philippi. It is the struggle between republicanism and imperialism. But the old Roman consciousness has passed away forever; again the star of the republic sinks beneath the horizon, and will rise no more. The second Pompey is destroyed by the second Cæsar, the representative and heir of the Empire. The third collision is within the Triumvirate, and is the essential one of the play. Lepidus, the peacemaker where no peace is possible, is speedily eliminated; then the struggle between Antony and Octavius breaks forth in its full intensity. The former seems satisfied with the threefold division of the world, and, above all, desires to be let alone in his Oriental enjoyment. But Octavius has the thought of unity as his deepest principle and as his strongest ambition; he thus is the representative of the world-historical spirit and conquers — must conquer. Such are the three political collisions of this drama, each

one of which becomes more intense as it becomes more narrow: The external collision of Rome against the rest of the world; the internal conflict of the old Roman principle against the Triumvirate; finally, the disruption of the Triumvirate and the triumph of the imperial principle.

Amid these purely political elements is mingled the domestic collision of Antony — his violations of the ties of the family. He has abandoned his first Roman wife for the unethical relation to Cleopatra. After a time, however, he leaves the latter and returns to the Roman Family with new resolutions; but his second Roman wife he also deserts and returns to Cleopatra. Thus he abandons both the Roman State and the Roman Family for an Oriental country and an Oriental mistress; it is clear that he can make no claim to being the champion of the destiny of his country, which he has thus forsaken. Rome has already subordinated the Oriental world, but Antony goes back to it; we may see his fate clearly written in its fate.

This enumeration gives the principal factors of the play, though by no means in their true dramatic order. But the material of the work is so multifarious and complicated that the mind must have some guide to which it can turn when it gets lost in the labyrinth of detail. The universal complaint is that *Antony and Cleopatra* is wanting in dramatic simplicity, and the complaint

is certainly well founded. To the less careful reader or spectator its movement seems confused — at times chaotic — and there is hardly a doubt but that the Poet has undertaken to compass too much in the limits of one drama. Still, it has his language, his thought, and his characterization in their highest potency. We shall now pass to consider the organization of the play as a whole, and attempt to unfold its various parts, stating their meaning and relation.

There are manifestly two main movements, though other divisions are possible, according to the stand-point of the critic. The first movement exhibits the various conflicting elements of the Roman World, and ends in their apparent reconciliation. It has three distinct threads or groups of characters, each of which has a locality of its own. The central figures of these groups are, respectively, Antony and Cleopatra, Octavius, Pompey. The second movement shows the disruption of the truce and the struggle of the hostile principles and individuals, till their final and complete subordination to one man — Octavius. Here there are essentially two threads — that of Antony and Cleopatra on the one hand, and that of Octavius on the other; the minor groups are more or less intimately connected with these leading personages. The elaboration of this scheme will show all the elements of the work in their proper order and signification.

I.

There is a general sweep forward from a threatened breach between the parties — Antony, Pompey, Octavius — to a patched-up reconciliation. The Triumvirate is showing its seams, and the whole Roman world is about to break into warring fragments, but a temporary truce holds it together, which truce, however, breaks the love-bond between Antony and Cleopatra.

1. The first thread of the first movement may be called the Egyptian thread, and is the fullest in its portraiture, as well as the most interesting. The first speaker is an old Roman soldier, who strikes at once the key-note of the drama. He complains in bitter scorn that the illustrious warrior, the “triple pillar of the world,” has sacrificed his great historical destiny to sensuality. But here come the pair; what is their conversation? They are talking of love, whose power Antony expresses in the strongest language. It is illimitable — subdues all; it demands “a new heaven and a new earth.” Note must be taken that this is not the ethical affection of the Family, but sensual love. Here is indicated the strongest principle of Antony’s nature; he will often fluctuate between his contradictory impulses, but in the end will always return to the “Egyptian dish.” Just now he is feeling some satiety and

shame, which he seeks to disguise carefully from Cleopatra.

She, however, with a true instinct of the situation, suspects him, and we shall now behold the successive waves of jealousy, anger, affection, despair, which heave and surge through her breast. The fundamental trait of Cleopatra is passion — passion in all its forms and in its fullest intensity. As love, as hate, as irascibility, as jealousy, it has the same colossal manifestation. There is absolutely no ethical subordination in the woman. She recognizes no duty, submits to no institution. She seems to have admiration for the heroic element of Antony's character, and, with the true instinct of her sex, she adores his courage; but her love for him springs mainly from his boundless capacity for revelry and sensual indulgence, in which she participates along with him. Corresponding quite to the degree and intensity of her passion, the Poet has portrayed her power of fascination — indeed, the one arises from the other. It is curious to note how some of the greatest personages of Roman history have, in turn, submitted to her spell: Pompey, Julius Cæsar, and now Antony. The contrast is apparent; it would seem as if the adamantine Roman character must always sink before this gorgeous Oriental enchantress. But she is destined to meet with her master. The cool and wary Octavius sees her; she tries her sorcery upon him without

success, and then — dies. It is her destiny that, if her charm be once withstood, she, like the Sirens of old, will destroy herself. Her attractiveness does not consist in youth, in grace, in figure, in personal beauty; it lies in the sensual intensity of her whole being, which appears to set on fire all who dare look into her eyes. Such is the central principle of her character.

At first she torments Antony with her suspicions, because she sees the conflicting principles in his bosom. Her sarcasms are directed against the “married woman” Fulvia, wife of Antony, and also against Octavius, who, a “scarce bearded” youth, undertakes to dictate to the old warrior. Her purpose is manifest; she wishes to sever Antony from all Roman connections. Hence she tries to engender a conflict which may lead to a separation of the Orient from the Roman Empire; at least she is seeking to detain Antony by every means in the East. But she sneers also at his domestic relation, and, above all, desires to detach him from the Roman Family. The purpose which runs through all her conversation is to break off the two main ethical relations which still have some power over him, namely those of family and country.

But Antony is resolved to go; the death of Fulvia causes him even to long for a Roman wife, and the political occurrences demand his immediate presence in Rome. Now comes the separa-

tion; it is what might be expected. To follow her through the careenings of her passions is unnecessary. As the cynical Enobarbus intimated, she dies instantly — dies twenty times and more. But Antony holds fast to his purpose with a Roman firmness, amid all her extravagant ado, which fact for a time leads us to hope well for his future. Again we behold her during the absence of her lover. Imagination, excited and intensified by the deepest trait of her nature — by her passion — now controls her. His image is always present to her mind; it surpasses all the memories of the other Roman heroes who yielded in times past to her enchanting wiles. Next we behold her under the influence of bad news; word has come that Antony is married — again has allied himself to the Roman Family. Her passion now reaches its climax in the form of anger; she becomes simply irrational in her rage; she beats the innocent messenger, and even prepares to kill him. Her seeming justification is that she is subject to moral self-control no more than the elements.

“Some innocents ’scape not the thunderbolt!”

But she bethinks herself. She knows the power of her sensuous attractions; she, too, knows their deep hold upon Antony. What, then, are the years, the beauty, the disposition, of Antony’s new wife? “let him [the messen-

ger] not leave out the color of her hair!" By patient questioning she discovers that the personal graces of Octavia must be far inferior to her own, and, above all, that the Roman wife is wholly wanting in fervid intensity of passion.

" She shows a body rather than life,
A statue than a breather."

Cleopatra is so well satisfied — indeed, delighted — with the result of the examination that she now rewards the messenger with gold. She has the most unerring instinct, which tells her the deepest principle of Antony's nature; she knows that Antony must, in course of time, turn away from the cold and unattractive Octavia, and go back to the enjoyment of sensual love, which he can find in the highest manifestation only in her. This inference is not, and cannot, be falsified by the event. Antony returns because he must obey that which is strongest within him. Such is Cleopatra — the embodiment of all that which is most fascinating to the senses of man, and at the same time the victim of her own powers of fascination. For she is tortured with her own passion even more than she tortures; her gift, so painful and fatal to others, is equally painful and fatal to herself. Her world is a carnival of self-gratification — no ray of duty or of ethical devotion enters there; physical agony is

the sole retribution which comes home to sensual indulgence.

Such are the outlines of her personal character ; but she is something more than this person merely. She is the representative of a whole people. She belongs to Egypt, the land of the sphinx, she is herself the sphinx. She has the head of the human being attached to the body of the animal ; the rational and the sensuous elements are in her conjoined to one shape, in which, however, they are distinct and unreconciled, nay, contradictory. She is the riddle of Egypt propounded to Roman Antony, which he cannot solve, but Octavius can. The image of the sphinx is the utterance in stone of the Egyptian by the Egyptian, who was not able to harmonize, either in spirit or in art, the dual and contradictory nature of man. Cleopatra is not the classic beauty, though she has in her veins Greek blood which has lapsed to the Orient ; she is rather the re-incarnation of the old Egyptian spirit which has somehow wandered into her Hellenic body — of the spirit that hewed out the sphinx as its artistic representation. The poet does not, indeed, say this, but he has caught the true historic character of Egypt from Plutarch, and made it live in a person.

We must not dismiss the political side from the delineation of Cleopatra. She is queen, and her game is kings of men, the greatest of the time, though uncrowned. She has political, nay, mili-

tary ambition; love-craft and state-craft are coupled in her nature so intimately that they can not be separated. Still she remains the grand enchantress of the world; that is, her power over the senses of men is so great and immediate, that it cannot be resisted. She puts all under her charm, but in doing so, she becomes herself the victim of her own spell. At last, however, the Circe of Egypt finds her Ulysses.

Still another trait must not be left out of the picture. Coupled with this demonic sensuous power, is the intellect of Cleopatra; she has mental culture of a certain kind, she has a good deal of insight into character; she possesses, above all, subtlety in adjusting herself to men. In fact her intelligence is always looking out for her advantage, and in a certain degree directs her passions. But the human head is on the animal body.

2. We can now go back and take up the second thread of the first movement. The two colleagues of Antony are at Rome, the true center of the nations at that time; their conversation turns upon the man who has sacrificed his Roman destiny to Oriental indulgence. We catch a glimpse of the Triumvirate, with the relation and character of its three members.

Octavius is the man of cold understanding, who has grasped his ultimate end with clearness, and who pursues it in politic disguise, but with

inflexible determination. Already we can see his grand purpose looming up in the future ; we also see that he plainly comprehends the conflict which he must pass through in order to attain his object. His great obstacle is Antony, who surpasses him in every quality except the greatest, namely, the mind to grasp, and the will to accomplish, the world-historical destiny of Rome. This is for Octavius the highest end ; to it everything else has to yield. For this reason his character has often excited moral aversion. He sacrifices his colleague ; his sister, whom he seems really to have loved, is thrust by him into a short and unhappy marriage to further his policy ; he disregards the most sacred promises ; in fine, all the emotions of man, and all the scruples of conscience, he subordinates to his great purpose — the union of the nations in one empire. He himself says in one place that he is seeking universal peace — the harmony of the whole world in a single government. He is one of those world-historical characters whose fate it is to be always condemned for trampling upon moral considerations when they collided, not merely with his own subjective purpose, but with the absolute movement of humanity, which he represented.

But Antony, in this fundamental trait, is the contrast to Octavius. He is one of the triumvirs ; he is a great soldier, with heroic elements

of character; he was the victor at Philippi; he was the friend and supporter of Julius Cæsar. His opportunity is really greater than that of Octavius. But he has not the clear ultimate end; he is not at one with himself; his controlling principle is enjoyment — gratification of the senses — though he is capable of enduring the most terrible hardships of war. Hence he falls into the lap of Orientalism, yet struggles to return to his Roman life and destiny; but he finally relapses completely, and thus loses the great opportunity. Between these two men — Antony and Octavius — the struggle must arise. The question is: Which one will unify the Triumvirate? From the very beginning the Poet has elaborated the dramatic motives so forcibly that the result is plainly foreseen.

Now there remains the third triumvir — Lepidus. He is the peace-maker, though peace is impossible; he tries to compromise two contradictory principles which are on the point of embracing in a death-struggle. Conciliation is possible between individuals, but not between principles. If one principle be truer — that is, more universal than another — the former must subordinate the latter; for, otherwise, it is not more universal. The higher truth must realize itself — must make its superiority valid in the world; this means always the subsumption of what is lower. Lepidus, therefore, has no per-

ception of what is going on around him; he placed himself between the two jaws of the world, and is speedily ground to death. His basis is the peaceful continuance of the present condition of affairs — of the Triumvirate— which is in reality a fleeting phase of the great transition to imperialism. A man with good intentions, but with a weak head amid a revolution — what is in store for him but annihilation?

Lepidus is one of those peculiar characters whom we may designate as an important nobody. Such people seem to be needed at times; they rise and assert a place by virtue of being at the point of indifference where two great opposites meet, and call forth a neutral third person. Lepidus shows the neutral color, which has also the advantage of being reflected in the mirror of Enobarbus' sarcasm. It is hinted in Plutarch that Antony and Octavius, two strong characters took Lepidus, the third weak character, to turn the edge of envy and suspicion, by sharing thus their power.

The first utterance of Octavius is a complaint against Antony; he is disgracing his office and his country by his conduct in Egypt; he has insulted his colleagues; but, above all, he has permitted, through his inactivity, the enemies of the Triumvirate again to muster their forces and threaten Italy. In other words, he is faithless to his high calling and to the destiny of Rome,

which is the most serious thought of Octavius. Here is seen plainly the difference of their characters and their ends. But Antony has shaken off the Egyptian enchantress — has come to Rome; the two rivals are brought face to face in order to settle their quarrel. Antony answers the complaints of Octavius with such success that they are seen to be mere pretexts for the most part; still the old veteran asks pardon of his youthful confederate, and thus tacitly points out the superior to whom he acknowledges responsibility and submission. In this act the destinies of the two men are truthfully foreshadowed. But Octavius is not yet ready to strike the final blow; he must first unify all the rest of the Roman world against his antagonist. He, therefore, consents to conciliation; and, to tie the hands of Antony for a time, he gives his sister in marriage to the latter, as suggested by his wily counselor, Agrippa. The tether works well; it holds Anthony till both Lepidus and Pompey are overwhelmed, and their territory absorbed by Octavius. But now they, Antony and Octavius, are reconciled, and hasten to unite their powers against the common foe of the Triumvirate.

Such are the transactions of Antony at Rome; their nature and consequences are now foreshadowed in two very different ways, through two very different characters — through Enobar-

bus and the Soothsayer. Enobarbus is a wonderful delineation; he is the mirror which reflects the results of the deeds which are enacted by the high personages of the drama; in particular, he adumbrates the conduct of Antony, his friend and companion. His chief trait is intellectual sagacity; he foresees with the clearest vision and foretells with the most logical precision. But he possesses at the same time the reverse side of human nature in colossal magnitude; glutton, debauchee, sensualist, he seems immersed in the very dregs of Egyptian license, and when he is absent his memory is filled with Egyptian orgies. The two extremes meet in him — the keenest intelligence and the grossest sensuality; the mediating principle between them — namely, moral subordination — seems not to exist. He is the peculiar product of an age of corruption, in which even mental cultivation aids in blasting the character. He appears to have anticipated the main consequences from the beginning; he tried to keep Antony in Egypt; then he sought to prevent the reconciliation with Octavius. He also intimates that the marriage will in the end intensify the enmity which it was intended to forestall. For he knows that Antony will return to the Egyptian Queen; his highly-colored account of her appearance when “she pursed up his heart upon the river Cydnus” indicates the power of fascination over the senses, and the deep hold

which she must consequently retain upon Antony. Enobarbus manifestly thinks that his master ought to go back at once to Egypt, though his appetite seems to favor such a decision quite as strongly as his judgment.

Such is the intellectual reflection of Antony's conduct and destiny ; now follows a second reflection of the same through a wholly different medium, namely, through the prophetic emotion. Its bearer is the Soothsayer. This man, too, urges very strongly the return to Egypt—the reason whereof he says he has not in his tongue, but in his feeling, in his instinctive perception of the future. Antony is warned that the demon, “thy spirit that keeps thee,” cannot resist the might of Cæsar ; it becomes afraid in the presence of the latter. Antony feels the truth of the declaration, resolves to go back to Egypt, and gives the true ground—“in the East my pleasure lies.” The Soothsayer thus utters in his peculiar form that which has already been told ; the principle of Antony is subordinate to the principle of Octavius—the higher end must vindicate its superior power. This is not only known, but is now felt ; the Poet has indicated the same result both through intelligence and through feeling. The Triumvirate is, however, reconciled within itself, and must turn its attention to its external foe.

3. This is Pompey, who is the central figure of

the third thread of the first movement, which thread may now be taken up and traced. Pompey, from the first, exhibits no great strength of purpose, no firm reliance on his principle. He stands as the representation of the old republican constitution of Rome, in opposition to the tendency to imperialism; he cites as examples of admiration those "courtiers of beauteous freedom," pale Cassius and honest Brutus, who drenched the capitol,

— "That they would

Have one man but a man. And that is it
Hath made me rig my navy" — etc.

He has also a personal ground — to avenge the fate of his father. But he is clearly not the man to be at the head of a great political movement. He has, moreover, a scrupulosity which makes him sacrifice his cause to a moral punctilio. Such a man ought never to begin a rebellion whose success is not his highest principle. His main hope is that Antony will remain in the East; but, when the latter returns and is reconciled with Octavius, Pompey becomes frightened at their hostile preparation and compromises for a certain territory — that is, he really joins the Triumvirate in the division of the world, and thus utterly abandons the principle which he represented. Logically, he is now absorbed in the new idea by his own action, and he disappears as a factor of the drama.

His position is wholly due to the fact that he was the son of the great Pompey; birth, the most external of grounds, makes him leader. But by the side of him is seen the genuine old Roman republican, to whom the cause means everything, though he is called a pirate by his enemies. This is Menas, who sees and condemns the folly of the new treaty; who reflects the weakness of Pompey as Enobarbus reflects the weakness of Antony. Now comes the supreme moment of Pompey's career. All three of the triumvirs are on board of his galley, holding high festival in honor of the peace; the rulers of the world, the enemies of his principle, are, as it were, bagged and placed at his disposition. Menas urges upon him immediate action with the greatest vehemence; but no, his "honor" will not let him, the nature of which honor is seen in his declaration that he cannot advise the doing of the deed, but he would applaud it if it were done. Menas now deserts, for he to whom the good old cause is the highest principle of existence cannot endure to see the destiny of Rome and of the world sacrificed to a moral scruple. However great may be our admiration of Pompey's motive, it destroys his world-historical character; both he and Antony are, therefore, alike in surrendering their grand opportunity, though the one yields it to sensual love and the other to conscience. Pompey, accordingly, keeps his

agreement, but Octavius, who subordinates both emotion and morality to his great political purpose, breaks that same agreement when his plan is ripe, and slays his confederate in return for the latter's fidelity and conscientiousness. The character of Brutus in *Julius Cæsar* is in this respect repeated in Pompey.

Now, if the moral test be the sole and absolute test of the deed under all circumstances, it is manifest that Pompey is the hero of this play, as Brutus is, by the same criterion, the hero of *Julius Cæsar*. But if there be a national — indeed, a world-historical — duty as well as a moral duty, and if these duties come into irreconcilable conflict, in which one side must be subordinated to the other, the question can by no means be so easily dismissed. The solution of Shakespeare is plain, and it is the same as that of history. The national or the world-historical principle always subsumes the moral, because it is the truer, the more universal. This very drama is condemned by certain critics because it is said to have no noble — that is, moral — characters, and because it represents the political principle as triumphant. The complaint is frivolous; the Poet has written from the complete reality, and not from a one-sided abstraction, which, however valid in its sphere, has limitations which it ought not to transcend. The ultimate criterion of these critics is the

moral one, which is certainly not that of the Poet.

Indeed, there is just this struggle between the moral and political elements going on at all times in all countries. The purely moral man is in a condition of chronic disgust at public life and public men; he generally judges by altogether too narrow a standard, and is, hence, unjust. But the public man is also too apt to sacrifice moral considerations to some supposed expediency, when, in reality, there is no conflict of duties. The relations of the individual in society must ordinarily be controlled by morality; this is just its function. But in revolutions—in periods of political disintegration—the collision between principles arises in its fullest intensity. One side must be chosen; still, the choice is a violation which calls forth a retribution. In our own recent struggle we all thought it our duty to sacrifice every moral tie to the imperial nationality, if the two conflicted. In that prolonged and intense effort the moral consciousness of private and public life disappeared, for it was immolated; though the nation was saved, the Nemesis of violated morality still scourges us; this is the real price, the spiritual price—and not the blood or the treasure spent—which we paid, are now paying, and shall continue to pay for our national existence.

In the final scene of this thread, where the banquet is portrayed, we behold the fate of all the leading characters foreshadowed in the most subtle manner. Here are collected the representatives of the main conflicting principles of the drama — Antony, Pompey, Lepidus, Octavius, with their chief subordinates. They indulge in a drunken carousal, symbolical of the mad confusion of the period. Truly the world is on a spree. Who will keep his head clear and retain his senses amid the wild revel? Lepidus first yields to the wine, and is carried out; the others sink into an Egyptian debauch; but the cool-headed Octavius never for a moment loses his self-control, and when he finds himself touched with the wine he hastens away from the company. No sensual pleasure can conquer his understanding; he will remain master. The symbolism of this scene is complete on every side, and doubtless was intended by the poet.

Such is the first general movement of the play, ending in the reconciliation of all the colliding characters. The Triumvirate is restored to internal harmony; Pompey is admitted to a share of its authority; Antony is restored to the Roman Family and State. Even external conquest breathes for a moment. Nothing is settled, however; principles have been compromised, but they are as antagonistic as before.

II.

Suddenly comes the disruption. The Poet does not portray it in full—he merely indicates the result. Cæsar and Lepidus united to destroy Pompey, then Cæsar turned upon Lepidus; which important events are all announced in one short scene. Antony leaves Octavia; next we find him with Cleopatra. Such is this rapid separation which introduces the second general movement of the drama. There are now essentially but two threads, namely, the two antagonists, with their respective adherents. Of this last movement there are three distinct phases or groupings—the first defeat of Antony, his second defeat and death, the death of Cleopatra. The structure of this second movement proceeds not by threads, but by groupings, which we shall follow out in order.

1. Antony, when he fully comprehends the inexorable purpose of Octavius to subordinate him also, takes his departure from Octavia. She is the true Roman wife, who is by no means devoid of deep emotion, but it is the quiet, pure emotion of the Family; her feeling is confined to the bounds of an ethical relation, and herein she is the direct contrast to Cleopatra, whose passion is hampered by no limitations. She tried to perform her duty to both husband and brother; but

that husband had as his deepest impulse sensual, instead of conjugal love, and that brother had as his strongest principle political supremacy, instead of fraternal affection, even if he possessed the latter also. Octavia, with the most beautiful devotion, tried to conciliate the conflicting individuals, but was sacrificed by both. Thus the Family sank before the thirst of passion and before the thirst for power.

The Poet, having elaborated the motives of all that is to follow, passes at once to the scene of the struggle which is to decide the fate of the two colliding personages. The infatuation of Antony is brought out in the strongest colors; he fights a naval battle against the advice of all his soldiers, from the commanding officer down to the common private in the ranks. The ground of his conduct is the control exercised over him by Cleopatra. Then during the crisis of the fight she flies; Antony follows. The result is utter defeat by sea, universal desertion by land. His Oriental connection has thus brought to ruin his world-historical opportunity; he has sacrificed everything Roman — even his Roman courage. The internal struggle now begins. He feels the deep degradation of his behavior; the memories of his Roman life again awake in him; he seems ready to reproach the cause of his fatuity; but the weeping enchantress by her presence subdues him more completely than Octavius had done in

the battle just fought, and again his deepest trait asserts itself: —

“Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates
All that is won and lost; give me a kiss —
Even this repays me.”

But even a stronger evidence of his love is given. He suddenly comes upon Thyreus, the messenger of Cæsar, toying with the hand of Cleopatra. There ensues a fit of jealousy so violent that he totally forgets his generous nature and orders the man to be whipped. The thought of her infidelity crazes him; he has loved her more than the whole world in the literal sense of the expression, since he has sacrificed the world for her sake. What if another shares with him the possession? The strongest element of his nature revolts. But a declaration of Cleopatra lulls his wrath; again harmony prevails. Now, however, their union is threatened from without by the approach of the victorious Octavius — a conflict which must arouse all his dormant energy.

Octavius is true to his aim throughout these scenes; his cool calculation is never disturbed by a whiff of passion — his politic cunning is everywhere paramount. His enemy is surrounded by a net-work of espionage, while his own movements are artfully concealed. He acts with a celerity and secrecy which are incomprehensible to Antony; his insight into the real situation is

never clouded for a moment. He orders the battle to be fought at sea, with every advantage in his favor. His imperturbable understanding, which grasps clearly the end in view and the means to reach the same, shines through all his actions. After the victory he will grant no terms to Antony, who must be entirely eliminated from the world in order to produce unity. But Cleopatra he attempts to detach by specious promises; he has no faith in her fidelity, and but little trust in women under the most favorable circumstances. She seems to listen to his proposals; her conduct is at least ambiguous; two opposite impulses divide her purpose.

2. We pass on to the second phase of the second movement, embraced in the Fourth Act. Antony now has a new motive for action—his union with Cleopatra is in jeopardy. His heroic character returns in its fullest intensity; he fights, not to save an empire, but to preserve his relation to the Egyptian Queen. It will be noticed that the deepest principle of his nature is assailed; he might dally away the world, but he cannot surrender the tie to Cleopatra. Again we behold all the noble elements of his nature in full play—his generosity, his warm-heartedness, even to servants—his activity, his heroism. Nor is the other side of his character omitted; there must be a final debauch before departure for the battle-field. Still, there is the dark reflection of

the future; music in the air is heard by the common soldiers, who express their feelings in ominous words; their belief is that the god Hercules, tutelar deity of Antony, is now leaving him—his cause is lost beyond hope.

A second battle is fought; a temporary advantage is gained on land, but the Egyptian fleet yields to the foe—traitorously as Antony supposes, and as also we may suppose. The internal conflict now arises more fiercely than ever; she to whom he has sacrificed a world has betrayed him. What agony could be more intense? She appears before him, but neither her presence nor her language can assuage his revengeful anger this time; she has to leave him. But is his love entirely gone—that which was the strongest principle of his nature? She will put the matter to proof, the test being death—absolute separation. Accordingly word is sent to him that she is no more; that she dies with his name on her lips. He answers the test in the fullest degree—separation from her means death, which he at once proceeds to inflict upon himself. Other motives, too, influence his resolution—as the sense of shame, the fear of dishonor, the loss of his opportunity; but the main impelling power which drove the last blow was the thought of being forever disjoined from Cleopatra. Thus his deepest principle asserts itself with an absolute supremacy. He had already sacrificed an empire

and a world-historical destiny for his love; it is easy and consistent now to give his life in addition. His career is made up of a series of external conflicts on account of his passion, and internal conflicts with his passion.

3. The third phase of the second movement is embraced in the last Act. Cleopatra is now the central figure. The difference between her and Antony is seen in the fact that she is willing to survive him, but he was not willing to survive her; separation does not mean death in her case. There is, however, no doubt about her love for Antony, but there is as little doubt about her readiness to transfer it to another person. She has been making provision for the future—she has been laying plans to catch Octavius in her toils. He comes into her presence; but he is not charmed; his cool head cannot be turned by sensuous enchantment. This seals her fate. She has met her master; she has found the man who is able to resist her spell. The proof is manifest—she learns that Octavius intends to take her to Rome to grace his triumph. This secret is confided to her by Dolabella, who seems to be the last victim of her magical power. That power is now broken; nothing remains except to die. Still, she shows signs of a better nature in this latter part—misfortune has ennobled her character:—

“My desolation begins to make a better life.”

The heroic qualities of Antony, now that he is gone and she can captivate no new hero, fill her imagination; she will go and join him in the world beyond. Her sensual life seems purified and exalted as she gives expression to her "immortal longings." Her deepest trait is, however, conquest through sensual love; she will live as long as she can conquer; when her spell is once overcome she will die, dwelling in imagination upon the greatest victory of her principle and upon its most illustrious victim.

The manner of her death corresponds to the manner of her life. She had thought on her final passage beyond: "Her physicians tell me she had pursued conclusions infinite of easy ways to die." No hard struggle with the grim King of Terrors she seeks; a sleep, an unconscious gliding out of life is her choice — a soft lulling of the senses, which will not wake again. She finds in the bite of the asp her longed-for euthanasia: —

She looks like sleep,
As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.

Thus it is said of her, as she lay in her last appearance; she had seemingly fascinated death.

The fate of the immediate personal dependents of Antony and Cleopatra is connected with that of their master and mistress. The relation is so intimate that they die together; the devo-

tion of the servants will not permit them to survive. But Enobarbus is the most interesting of all these subordinate personages; his character, too, undergoes a change in this second part. His sharp intellect has foreseen, and tried to avert, the consequences of Antony's folly, but without avail. Now begins his internal conflict. Should he follow interest and desert a fool, or preserve fidelity and cling to his fallen master? It does not surprise us that he goes over to Cæsar; that he was led by his sagacity and not by his moral feeling. He saw the rising star of Octavius, and followed — but bitter is his disappointment. The conqueror will not trust a traitor. Enobarbus finds out that he has "done ill;" his intelligence has failed utterly. But this is not all. The generous Antony sends his treasure after him with kindly greetings. Now he calls himself, not fool, but villain; the moral elements — as honor, gratitude, fidelity, conscience — burst up in his soul with terrific force. This principle of morality, which was previously so inert, is now supreme, asserting itself over both pleasure and intellect. He repents of his conduct, but is not reconciled; he slays himself — an irrational act, but one which shows that remorse was stronger than existence. So intense is his anguish that he will not retain a life without moral devotion.

Octavius has passed his final and supreme con-

flict, which the Poet seems to make the most difficult, as well as the most glorious, of all the conflicts in the drama. This victory is greater than the victory over Antony, who had already been subdued by Cleopatra; now the mighty conqueress is herself conquered. The man who can resist the fascination of the Orient is the true Roman — is the ruler capable of maintaining and perpetuating the Roman principle and the Roman empire. Even Alexander was absorbed by the East, and his realm passed away like a dream. Octavius can spend a tear of pity over his illustrious foes, but his emotions never clouded his judgment or hindered the clear, definite pursuit of his political end. When the play terminates we feel that a great epoch, with its external and internal throes, with its weak men and mighty heroes, has passed away. All the struggles are overcome, not by temporary compromises, but by the subordination of the lower to the higher principle. The world finds unity, peace and law in the Empire. This epoch is, therefore, the true date of Imperialism.

In looking back at the characters of this play, we find that there are three who cannot subject their sensuous to their moral nature, and perish in consequence — the victims of Egypt. First is Cleopatra, the grand enchantress and incarnation of the Egyptian principle, who has this dualism in herself through her nation as well as through

her nature. Second is Antony, the man of action, who yields his Roman will to Oriental witchcraft, and refuses moral subordination. The third is Enobarbus, the man of intelligence, with the gift of the gods, which he drags through the mire of Egyptian debauchery. So these three persons, each with different endowments, are one in their moral failure. It should be noticed, too, that all three come to recognize their delinquency, and utter it with a kind of sorrow, which, however, is not full of repentance, or the spiritual change of life.

But if the play shows people who are tragic through moral violation, it also portrays the moral man who may become tragic through his very morality. This is Pompey, who in his turn collides the world-historical personage, Octavius. But this Octavius subordinates the previous spheres — the sensuous and the moral — to his principle. Thus we see a threefold gradation of characters running through the drama. Yet Octavius cannot be an attractive personage; too cold and passionless, in a sense too selfish, and too lucky, he has not enough of human limitation or misfortune to make him interesting.

Plutarch's biography of Antony, from which the poet drew his materials, is in its way as good as the play. In fact, the latter part of the biography is better than the latter part of the play; it has more unity, even more dramatic vitality.

It is probably the only case in which Shakespeare did not rise above his source. In general, Plutarch has the concentration of interest that is lacking in the play, which like most of the poet's latest work, has a tendency to the spectacular. Both have poetic color, wherein each is excellent in his own manner. Shakespeare's style, however, is not his best; it belongs to his last period, and is no longer so easy, fluent, unsought as it once was.

But the thought has in it the mighty historic sweep of Rome. We behold every stage: 1st. All the world against all Rome; 2nd. All Rome against three Romans; 3rd. Three Romans against one Roman, who conquers, and so rules the world. The supreme authority is in one person; thus personality has become the highest and most sacred thing in the world. Rome, from the rigid sacrifice of the person to the State, will now rise to the protection of the person, and will give to every individual in its borders the name and rights of citizen.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

It is not necessary to say much about this play. Its chief interest is certainly not æsthetic, but, from a biographical point of view, it derives some importance as indicating a very early and rude phase of the Poet's mental development. Since the biographical method is not followed in these essays, each drama must be regarded according to its own intrinsic worth, and not in its relation to the author. Two questions of some interest may be briefly noticed — the authenticity of the play, and its proper dramatic classification.

Titus Andronicus has often been declared not to be a work of Shakespeare's. The wish is here father to the thought; only internal evidence can be adduced in support of such an opinion, for the tradition mentioned by Ravenscroft, that Shakespeare "only gave some master touches to one or two of the principal characters," seems utterly untrustworthy. The external evidence is altogether too strong; many plays whose genuineness is not questioned are not so well authenticated. The testimony of Meres, and the insertion in the First Folio, are two facts which must

be accepted, and which carry along with them an irresistible conclusion. Conjecture has sought to explain them away into a slight revision on the part of Shakespeare; so it may be, but alas! so, too, it may not be. Science with her figures has also entered the arena, but with the result of getting dubious herself.

The second doubtful point is concerning the position of *Titus Andronicus* among the historical plays. Its right to such a place, though claimed by some critics, may be questioned. Its historical setting is manifest — the action occurs in an historical State, in an historical period, amid a great historical conflict; yet the story, as such, seems to be wholly legendary. But the political element equals, if it does not overtop, the domestic element; this is the essential test of an historical play. Tamora, the Gothic Queen, avenges upon Andronicus the defeat of her nation, as well as the slaughter of her son; also Aaron, the Moor, manifests the hatred of race, and his union with Tamora hints the union of the most diverse conquered peoples against their conqueror.

The most satisfactory way, therefore, is to consider this play as the termination of the Roman Historical series. For Rome herself was tragic, and her tragedy is hinted, though not directly expressed, in the present drama. Retribution came at last from those outlying barbar-

ous peoples against which she had committed so many wrongs for hundreds of years. It was necessarily a scene of pure human butchery, the like of which, in quantity and degree, was probably never seen before or since — that of mad savagery turned loose upon its oppressor. Hence, after all that may be said against it, the play of *Titus Andronicus*, with its accumulated horrors, gives a true reflex of the end of Roman History.

Analogies in Literature go to show that genius in its early stages has a period of *Sturm und Drang* — Storm and Stress. Schiller's *Robbers* and Goethe's *Goetz* are cited by German critics to explain the possibility of Shakespeare's writing *Titus Andronicus*. The majority of English critics, however, scout any such possibility. *Res ipsa per se vociferatur*, vociferates Mr. Hallam, a very judicial man usually, but seeming in the present case to dash suddenly Astræa's scales to the ground, and to defy evidence.

The play is full of classical allusions, which are dragged-in sometimes in a way so external that they have the air of a school-boy making his exercise. The English style of the play has a tendency to become turgid. But the author is sunk in his classicalities and turgidities. Now take another early play, *Love's Labor's Lost*, and place the two side by side. In the latter we see that the pedantry and bombast of the former

have become comic, and the young author is already passing out of his first stage, though he is still in it to a degree. He burlesques what was previously serious to him, and thus we behold him transcending two early limitations, namely, the learning of the grammar-school of Stratford, and the bombastic style of the old tragedy of Kyd and Marlowe.

There is no doubt of the great and immediate popularity of this play upon the stage, where it held its place many years, as we see by an allusion of Ben Jonson's in the year 1614, the play being then a quarter of a century old or more. It was even popular as a reading-play, as the number of quarto editions show. It suited the popular taste, and held its own through Shakespeare's entire dramatic career, against his far better and riper plays.

As it is one of his earliest, if not the very earliest of his dramatic efforts, the inference lies near that Shakespeare may have opened his theatrical career with a great success — a popular success which he never afterwards surpassed. (See Kurz, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Vol. 5, p. 83.) Shakespeare thus, like Goethe, was the child of good-luck from the start, and at once outstripped his contemporaries, when he took the field against the past and the future, and up to date, seems to have won and kept the prize.

KING JOHN.

King John strikes the key-note of the whole series of English Historical plays, namely, nationality. Its very beginning utters a defiance against France, the hereditary foe of England. The glory and supremacy of Fatherland constitute the theme; there is a glow of patriotic exultation, which makes many verses shine like diamonds, while the spirit of the whole work is one grand outburst of the love of country. There is in it the intense consciousness of English greatness, English freedom, English manhood. The style, though varied, is always an exalted reflection of its thought and feeling; the poetic fervor rises at times to a sort of national ecstasy. Other strong passions of the human soul are portrayed in the play, but they are all subordinated to supreme devotion to country. Such is the atmosphere which we here breathe, and which nerves the spirit with a new inspiration. Indeed, there is a special character introduced as the representative of nationality — a character which gives tone to the entire drama. It is Falconbridge, whose story is the golden thread which both illumines and holds together the other parts

of the action. Following his career, we are perpetually reminded of the theme which furnishes life and unity to the work.

In reading *King John* the chief disappointment seems to arise from the fact that nothing is said of the Great Charter. It would appear almost necessary that the great Dramatic Epos of English History should begin with the struggle from which England dates her liberties, and to which she points as the origin of her first and most important constitutional document. Thus the rise and growth of the English constitution would be the subject of the English Historical plays. But in *King John* the Great Charter is not even mentioned, and the nobles who revolt proceed on grounds very different from those recited in that famous instrument. It is clear that Shakespeare did not attach as much importance to the covenant at Runnymede as we do, if, indeed, he knew of its contents at all; the discussions and conflicts of a succeeding age first disturbed the dust on the venerable parchment. The struggle for individual liberty, which the Great Charter was supposed to guarantee, had not yet arisen, though its mutterings were plainly heard by the last of the Tudors. Under the Stuarts it broke forth and resulted in the Great Civil War. Then the origin of rights became the theme of warm discussion and diligent investigation; they were traced back to ancient grants and charters with that peculiar

reverence for precedent in every Anglo-Saxon bosom — a reverence which will never accept a new idea unless dressed up in old, worn-out garments.

Personal liberty, in its universal sense, was certainly not the essential point in the conflict between King John and his barons; that conflict arose between the rights of the nobility and the rights of the crown. The people, as such, occupy no prominent place in the Great Charter. But in the time of the Stuarts the struggle lay between the people on the one side, and the crown and nobility on the other. Had the Poet lived earlier or later, he might have taken one or the other form of this collision; as the case stands, he takes neither. The age of Elizabeth was not a struggle between the throne and the barons, nor between these united and the people. The elements of the nation were in harmony, hence it was a period of internal peace and national development. But there was a dynastic conflict with a foreign State, and a religious conflict with a foreign Church. The consciousness arising from this condition of affairs is precisely the foundation of the present drama; hence its theme is, primarily, the Right of Succession to the crown. Must the title vest absolutely in the eldest of the line? Is it necessary or just that the heir should always be monarch? Here the answer will be given by Shakespeare. Secondary, but important, is the conflict

with the See of Rome. The Poet cannot live out of his own time, in any true sense of the term; he writes his play, though it be historical, from the stand-point of his age.

The action will show the nation upholding the king, both against the legal heir of the throne and against the Church, as long as that king, in so doing, maintains the right and supremacy of the State. It will also show the nation falling off from the sovereign when the latter abandons his national principle and seeks to support his authority by violence and by external power. Thus there will be a transition from the true monarch of the people to the unfit occupant of a throne. The consciousness which underlies the whole fabric is that the right of a nation to a ruler is superior to the right of an heir to the crown. A kingdom is not a mere piece of personal property, subject to the laws of inheritance, or even of possession. Such is the conflict, plainly indicated; it is the universal right of the State against the individual right of the heir or of the possessor.

The drama has two well-marked movements—the one portraying the external struggle of the nation, the other portraying its internal struggle. Each movement has also two threads—the English and the foreign—and upon these threads the action takes its course. The first movement shows the king in conflict with the two extraneous powers—France and the Church—the political

and the religious enemy. Both unite against England — the one supporting the right of Arthur as the legal heir to the throne, the other asserting the claim of Papal domination. King John steps forth as the defender of imperiled nationality; the people support him; he wins a complete victory over his combined enemies. This victory is brought about chiefly by Falconbridge, the type of the English national hero. Such is the first movement; the nation supports the king against the heir and against the Pope. The second movement now begins; it will show the change of character in the monarch, and the consequent disruption of the country internally. As long as John maintained the honor of England abroad, and took nationality as his guiding principle, he retained the unswerving allegiance of the English people. But he has the misfortune to capture the true heir, and at once he plots the young prince's murder to secure his throne. Thus, by his own act, he makes title of supreme importance; and, as he has not the legal title in himself, he logically destroys his own cause. He abandons his national principle for the principle of inheritance, which he had himself previously nullified. His title is now questioned, since it is his own deed which calls attention to its defect. Revolt of the nobles follows; disaffection of the people shows itself in dark forebodings. Then comes

foreign invasion added to domestic strife, and, finally, an ignoble submission to the Church — that is, the victory which ended the first movement is completely reversed. John is no longer the true ruler, though he may now be the true heir after the death of Arthur; the nation is assailed from within and from without, and seems on the point of succumbing to the foreign political and to the foreign religious power — to France and to Rome. Nothing now remains to the king — who has sacrificed his most glorious national attribute, namely, the maintenance of the independence of England against all foes, internal and external — but death. Still, the nation cannot perish with him: the national hero, Falconbridge, again comes to the rescue of the drooping country; the enemy is worsted and retires, the nobles return to loyalty, a new king is crowned, and England is once more free from dissension and war. The very last speech of the play echoes the spirit of the whole; it is the exultant declaration of this same Falconbridge, the embodiment of English nationality, wherein he utters a parting shout of triumph and defiance: —

“ This England never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it first did help to wound itself.
Now, these her princes are come home again,
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them. Naught shall make us rue
If England to itself do rest but true.”

I.

The first movement shows John engaged in his struggle with external powers — France and the See of Rome. All kinds of conflicts arise — moral, domestic, political, ecclesiastical, but the nation and the king securely outride every blast of the tempest. Still in his success there lurks in John the consciousness of a wrong, the deed of guilt, which will yet bear fruit.

1. We can now proceed to the detailed elaboration of the plan which has just been outlined. Let us follow out the English thread of the first movement. The beginning of the play ushers in at once the national conflict between France and England — a conflict which is continually re-appearing throughout this whole series of historical dramas; hence the little scene here given is a kind of introduction to all which is to follow. The pretext on the part of France now is the claim of young Arthur to the throne. The simple legality of this claim is unquestioned. It is admitted by Queen Elinor, by Falconbridge, and, indirectly, by John himself; indeed, the pith of the play would be destroyed by a denial of it. But the assertion of Arthur's title by France is assailing the autonomy of England, since a foreign potentate thus dictates who shall be her ruler. A legitimate king who owes his throne to

external support cannot be the true representative of the State ; thus there arises a struggle between the right of inheritance and the right of the nation.

John is now forced, as it were, into becoming the defender of his country, and, hence, the bearer of nationality. This is his only claim — and, indeed, it is the highest claim — to the throne ; but he will lose sight of it — he will prove unequal to his lofty position. England is ready to ratify his title if he have the mettle of a ruler. It is at this point that we see the defect of his character ; he starts well, but breaks down. The poem, however, must have a man without this flaw — a true and persistent representative of the national spirit — in order to supply what is wanting in the King. Here he comes, just after the defiance given to France ; it is Falconbridge, to whose origin and personal qualities a long scene is devoted — not without purpose.

Let us scan him closely, therefore, and note every essential peculiarity with which the Poet has endowed him, for his character and actions belong not to History. The traits, physical and mental, which he manifests are so pronounced that the Queen-mother at once recognizes the young stranger to be the son of her son, Richard Cœur-de-Lion, whose exploits in the Holy Land had made him the English national hero. The descent of Falconbridge is finally established by the confession of his own mother. Thus both his

ancestry and his character point him out as the heir and supporter of English nationality. But the circumstance which is dwelt upon with special emphasis is his illegitimacy. The use to which the Poet puts this incident is in every way noteworthy, since it would seem to be a perilous fact to meddle with in a drama.

The object is manifestly to sever the heroic individual from the ethical relation of the Family in order to consecrate him more exclusively to the State. Falconbridge is first introduced to us disputing the claim of his legitimate brother to the paternal estate. His title to the property is based upon the fact that he is the elder son, which fact would ordinarily make out a clear case of right; but his sonship is questioned, and, what is more, is wholly disproved. He manifestly does not believe in his own claim; he very soon abandons it and accepts sonship derived from the great King Richard, outside of the pale of the Family. Thus he is declared the heir of that man whom the nation delights to call its hero, and now he will begin life anew as the champion of nationality. The frail-bodied, weak-spirited brother takes the inheritance of the Family, while Falconbridge himself is adopted into the great national family of the Plantagenets. The English humor which previously added such a healthy flavor to his English good sense now overflows his whole being, yet he is imbued with a hearty earnestness in

every fiber. He takes pride in his birth; he would not choose any other if he could. Legitimacy only is derived from the Family; his institution, the State, is something more exalted and more worthy of a great character. His origin, therefore, is national — as near as such a thing is possible — and not domestic; his career must be national, and not domestic.

In other plays the Poet has introduced the Bastard, but has endowed him with a character altogether different. In *Lear* and in *Much Ado About Nothing* he is portrayed as the natural villain, in hostility with the whole Ethical World. Since both Family and State disown him, deride him, oppress him without any fault of his own, he turns against them both and tries to destroy them. Such is the logical result of illegitimacy amid social institutions — their victim becomes their bitterest foe. But in the present play the Bastard is rescued by being elevated into a national existence, which is the more intense and vigorous because of his total separation from the domestic bond. He thus can have an institutional — that is, a truly national — life. Such is the meaning of his adoption into the Plantagenets — the royal family is national rather than domestic; but even in it he is still not legitimate.

The third character of this English group will express a new relation between Family and State. It is now a woman — Elinor — usually called "the

Queen-mother; that is, both queen and mother. Thus there are united in her person two relations — the political and the maternal — which are always incompatible and often in collision. On the French side is her counterpart, Constance, who also is, or aspires to be, Queen-mother. Each is the real power behind the throne, and each without doubt justly blames the other for the troubles which have sprung up; both have equal hate, yet both show a touch of horror at the war. The effect of this political relation of the mother upon the Family is now seen — its members are torn asunder with the passions of civil strife; Elinor opposes the claim of her grandchild, Constance goes to war with her son's kindred. Elinor is now Queen-mother, but, if Arthur possesses the crown, then she will no longer be Queen-mother, but Constance will be. Thus political ambition is the motive which drives her to disrupt her own family — to violate the right of her grandson, a right which she herself acknowledges to be valid. Domestic life is impossible in such a condition of affairs; the tender maternal relation loses its sweetness and beauty; its vital warmth is deadened by a political relation. Womanhood, too, drops its highest, most glorious, principle — devotion to the Family; its purity is sullied with rancor and intrigue; the female emotional nature turns to gall and becomes the source of the most bitter passion.

It is not to be denied, however, that a rational ground can be given for introducing the domestic into the political relation in the case of royal families; indeed, such a procedure is inwoven into the very fabric of the customs, laws, and institutions of modern Europe. Still, it means the sacrifice of the woman in the subordination of Family to State, for thus her world is destroyed or plunged into an atmosphere poisonous to its organization. Such is the English thread, with its three prominent characters, though others will be added hereafter. Each of these, it should be noticed, manifests some phase of the conflict between the domestic institution and the political institution.

2. We may now pass to the French thread and notice its leading personages. Here, too, we find a Queen-mother, or a woman seeking to be such — Constance, whose ambition has kindled a war between France and England. She is ready to sacrifice nationality to the claim of her boy and to her personal advancement; in general, she tries to immolate the State on the altar of her family. This is not political wisdom; for, if she conquered, her child could not be truly king — the ruler of an independent people. She would destroy the nation in acquiring its scepter; she thus is defeating her own end. But she is thereby made the unconscious instrument of French aggrandizement, and, when she is no longer needed, she is

quietly set aside. Her character is full of the deepest pathos and passion; the pith of her delineation lies in the perpetual struggle within her bosom between the mother and the queen; her soul is cut in two, and she surges from one side to the other in a tempest of grief. As queen she exposes her child to the perils of war and diplomacy, but as mother her heart breaks when he is taken prisoner. It must be granted, therefore, that motherhood was the deepest principle of her nature, though it was covered over with so much ambition and selfishness that it required a great calamity to make it burst up through the hardened crust on the surface.

The Duke of Austria, the next figure, is the result of an historical confusion of two different persons, but his character stands forth clearly outlined, though verging toward caricature. He is the intended contrast to Falconbridge, who hates him as the supposed slayer of Richard the Lion-hearted. The son is thus marked out as the avenger of his father's death, wherein, however, there is little honor, since the Duke is a notorious coward. But retribution is visited upon the destroyer of the English national hero, in spite of history and chronology, and patriotic feeling is satisfied. The fact that the Duke of Austria espouses the cause of Arthur is sufficient to brand it with the hostility of England.

Next come the French rulers, father and son,

whose contrast lies chiefly in their moral natures. The King is a man of conscience; his actions proceed from his convictions of duty; his ground for maintaining the title of Arthur is justice. He is also deeply religious in his feelings, but the essence of religion for him lies in its moral significance, and not in devotion to an ecclesiastical organization. With the latter, indeed, he will collide in the course of the play. He considers himself to be the guardian of right, violated in the person of a helpless boy, and his commission he holds

“From that supernal judge that stirs good thoughts
In any breast of strong authority,
To look into the blots and stains of right.”

The character of the man in other situations can leave no doubt concerning the sincerity of these words; it is the religious conscience which speaks in him and directs his actions. He, therefore, will develop a twofold conflict with the influences of his own party, besides his struggle with John. He is not a mere politician — hence he will collide with the political selfishness which is seeking to control the French expedition; nor is he a mere devotee of the Church — hence he will oppose its violation of good faith and moral rectitude. Conscience thus arrays him against the policy of the Dauphin and the policy of the Legate.

His son, Lewis the Dauphin, is of quite the opposite character; the moral element is simply cut out of his spiritual nature. He is a most obedient son of the Church when the Church falls in with his schemes of aggrandizement, but he sets aside her authority without the least hesitation if she oppose his designs. He is restrained by no delicate scruples of truth and honor from gaining a personal advantage; his plighted faith is merely a means of deception. He, therefore, disregards the conscience of his father on the one hand, and the authority of the Church on the other hand, if either should happen to stand in the way of his personal ambition; he is a self-seeker in politics and a hypocrite in religion. He has no great national end to excuse or sanction his ethical violations; his object is an individual one, to which he is ready to sacrifice both principles and institutions.

To complete this foreign group of characters we shall go out of the way a little, and consider here the Legate of Rome, Pandulph. Our mother, the Church — for this is the image which she loves to employ, and by which we love to designate her — transcends her religious function and seeks to control the political movements of the time. Her heavenly raiment thus becomes spattered with terrestrial mud; her religious yearnings are strangely intermingled with secular aspirations. Now, Pandulph is the embodiment

of this tendency — a political clergyman, or a clerical politician. In him the Church-mother, like the Queen-mother before mentioned, seems to have lost something of her maternal instincts, for she is continually falling out with her dear children and beating them sorely. It is true that they often deserve a whipping on account of their naughty behavior, but she appears to be not wholly impartial, for she is rather inclined to spare the favorite transgressor. Her representative is Pandulph, who is the master of cunning and casuistry — the one of which enables him to overreach in politics, the other to hunt down any moral scruples. He will have to face a double — indeed a triple — conflict; as he asserts the supremacy of the Church, he is forced to assail and suppress the claims of the State, Family, and Conscience.

Let us now pass to the story of the play and behold these characters in action. Before the walls of Angiers the French and English armies are drawn up and the struggle begins. The two Kings declare the grounds of their conduct; John asserts the right of national self-control without foreign interference; Philip maintains the right of inheritance, though he thereby has constituted himself the judge of another nation. Then the two Queen-mothers take up the dispute; the hot words fly like sparks; both indulge in a display of the fiercest passion. Their talk de-

scends to billingsgate, that smoking falchion of female indignation; the culminating point is reached by both when each charges the other with the highest vice of her sex — unchastity. Thus alongside the war of men we have the more furious, yet less bloody, war of women. The effect of political interest upon the Family is here seen to be the destruction of domestic harmony. Another pair of natural enemies — Falconbridge and Austria — show their teeth in this interview, but do not yet bite.

The town of Angiers is in a state of anxious inquiry; it has forgotten to which of the kings it owes allegiance, and is wholly unable to decide the question. Here they both come with sweet words of persuasion, but the arguments of each are so strong against the other that the town concludes to obey neither. That little community has reduced the science of politics to its ultimate proposition — we belong to the winning side. The monarchs themselves must first settle which of the two is the more powerful, for towards him its loyalty has no bounds. But the proposal angers Falconbridge; it seems to him to be an affront to nationality — his deepest principle. He, therefore, suggests that both armies reduce Angiers, and then they will have something to fight for. As the case stands, the exhausted victor would probably not be able to take the prize after it was won. The recusant town is on the

point of being punished for lack of patriotic devotion, but its political cunning does not desert it in the hour of need, and again it is ready with a new proposition. This is nothing less than a marriage between Blanche, the niece of King John, and Lewis, the son of King Philip, which makes the gates of the town fly open "with swifter spleen than powder."

The matter is speedily arranged; John divides the English territory in order to furnish the requisite dower, and herein shows his lack of national feeling. But, above all, eager is the heart of the crafty Elinor, Queen-mother, who thus wins a complete triumph over her rival, Constance. The King of France also yields to the political situation, after uttering one deep sigh of conscience and causing provision to be made for Arthur. The chief sacrifice, however, is the sweet and innocent Blanche. She is a princess; domestic life for her is impossible; she is to be offered up to the Moloch of the State. She accepts her destiny with resignation, though she tries to infuse into her situation some of the warmth of conjugal emotion; still, her royal birth tears her from the hearth in order to make her an offering. It is again the sacrifice of the Family to political considerations. The Dauphin takes the Princess for her lands, though he, in the hollow fashion of the court, gives an extravagant declaration of love. The object of such an

alliance is manifest; it is to banish the conflict of the State by interposing the Family — to supplant national enmity by domestic affection. The bulwark, however, is very imperfect; the demands of the State usually swallow up the ties of the Family, and a political marriage is sure to become a domestic curse. Such is the inherent nature of the present situation.

Let us next see what are the elements of opposition to this union. First, Falconbridge objects most decidedly — and he represents the spirit of the English nation. The agreement dismembers the territory of England; it violates national honor; it brings submission without a struggle. Indeed, both Kings have disregarded the principles upon which they began the war. John took arms to maintain the integrity of his country, which he has now divided; Philip “whose armor conscience buckled on,” has yielded the claim of Arthur for the sake of his own interests, though he tries to a certain extent to rectify his wrong. In reflecting upon these matters, Falconbridge is disgusted and angered at the political chicanery of both sides; he, for a moment, seems on the point of abandoning his great principle of nationality, and substituting self-interest or “commodity.” But this was merely a temporary fit of spleen; it is his first lesson in politics, and he will get over it like other people since his time. Though he here says, “Gain be my lord,” he re-

mains afterwards true to his lofty end, and continues to the last to be the faithful representative of the nation.

The second person whose opposition to the marriage may be expected is Constance. She sees her son's interests sacrificed, her own rights ignored, sacred oaths disregarded; all her hopes are at once crushed into despair. The intensity of her anguish throws out words that burn like molten iron; her passion turns to a wild frenzy. It is manifest that her political ambition is so ingrained into her very nature that to part with it is next to death. The question now arises in the mind of the reader or hearer: Which side of her double nature is the stronger — the queen or the mother? Her grief at present results from not being queen, for she is still mother — still possesses her boy. The severest test is soon to be applied. Constance will lose her little son in the approaching battle; she will then be no longer mother. Her conduct in that situation must tell which is the deeper principle of her character. But now it is her political disappointment that lashes her feelings into a tempest of passionate utterance.

The third opponent of the alliance with England — and, hence of the marriage of Blanche and the Dauphin — is Pandulph, the representative of the Church, which has excommunicated King John for disobedience to its mandates. The

Church thus asserts an authority above the State ; it is also an organized power, with mighty instrumentalities for enforcing its will. Now comes the conflict between the religious and political institutions. King John boldly proclaims the independence of the nation :

— “ No Italian priest
Shall tithe or toll in our dominions ;
But as we under heaven are supreme head,
So under heaven that great supremacy,
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,
Without the assistance of a mortal hand.”

This is a most emphatic statement of the political significance of the Reformation, which brought about the subordination of Church to State. Pandulph, on the contrary, asserts ecclesiastical supremacy, absolves the nation from its allegiance, takes away kingship ; in fine, he seeks to destroy utterly the civil relation between monarch and subject. He proclaims that the assassin of John is to be “ canonized and worshiped as a saint ; ” a monk will hereafter seek to obtain this most holy laurel.

The Legate also commands the recent agreement to be broken, and the French army to be employed against the English heretic. Let us now watch the father and son — Philip and Lewis — acting in accordance with their different principles. The son is without conscience. He sees in the present turn of affairs an opportunity

for personal advantage greater than that which the fulfillment of the marriage contract offered — he uses the church as a means. At once he becomes very pious, and insists upon obedience to Pandulph's order. To be sure, he violates good faith, and endangers the new-born Family to which he has pledged his sacred fealty; but these are moral considerations, which have not the weight of a feather against his self-interest.

Passing to the father, we observe one of the most profound collisions to be met with in the works of Shakespeare. Philip possesses a powerful — indeed, controlling — principle in conscience. Good faith, amity, oaths, are spiritual elements which he cannot disregard. But here is the Church, which commands him to break them; and the Church, too, is a principle which he acknowledges most devoutly. What is he to do? Philip hesitates to obey the mandate of Pandulph, and maintains the right of moral obligation as revealed in the human heart. It is the great function of the Church to foster and enforce the moral conscience of man; but the Church now has a political end, to which it subordinates its religious end. It is thus in contradiction with itself, and is really destroying the purpose of its existence. The King of France, therefore, asserts the internal spirit of the Church against its formal authority.

But Pandulph is just the man — who has been

trained by a rigid scholastic discipline — to meet and put down such cases of rebellious conscience. His argument goes to enforce the submission of private judgment to ecclesiastical control, and to assert the supremacy of the external organization of religion to its internal behests. Most subtly does he point out the contradiction between these two principles: —

“It is religion that doth make vows kept;
But thou hast sworn against religion
By what thou swear’st against the thing thou swear’st,
And mak’st an oath the surety for thy truth
Against an oath.”

The form also is most happy; the bald, logical utterances of scholastic divinity echo from every line; the vein of fine-spun casuistry, confusing the head and misleading the heart, gives a suspicious subtlety to the whole speech. But it is far from being a mere sophistical jingle of words; on the contrary, it is a genuine statement of the right of religious authority against the right of individual opinion. There is, however, a most important suppression in the argument of the Legate. It is that the prime duty of religion is to quicken the conscience of man; and when the organization of religion — the Church — for its own purposes seeks to deaden that conscience, its right of existence has ceased. Philip is manifestly not convinced, but withdraws his opposition, and henceforward drops out of the play

The mandate of Pandulph causes still another struggle — it threatens the disruption of the Family, here represented by the Lady Blanche. The agreement whereby her marriage took place is broken — broken by order of the Church which makes marriage a sacrament. Which shall she follow? Husband or kindred? It tears her heart asunder to decide. Blanche differs from the other women of the drama in having no political ambition; she is the true woman — devotion to the Family is her whole nature. But the Family is now at war with itself; so must she be. Both Church and State sacrifice her to their purposes. She was born to be an offering; her lovely form is mangled in the conflict of nations; the last note that we hear from her is a wail of agony over her situation.

If we now sum up the collision in which the Church is involved, we find it to have three phases — the collision with State, Family, and Morality. A political supremacy is the ultimate object of the See of Rome. In carrying out this object it comes into conflict with the entire sphere of ethical relations. It compels the individual to fight against his nation; to disregard his domestic ties; to surrender his conscience. Now, since religion must have these ethical principles as its true content, it has reached a condition of absolute self-contradiction — its organization has turned into the bitterest foe of that which it was created

to secure. The opposition between form and spirit is carried to the point at which they entirely fall asunder, and a breach is inevitable. But the Church, for the present, triumphs over all its obstacles — it subordinates State, Family, and Conscience to its designs ; the schism within it has not yet sunk into the mind of Europe.

This great conflict is not portrayed by the Poet with partisan bigotry and malice, but it is shown in its simple purity — in its true colliding principles. The old play of *King John*, which Shakespeare probably took as the foundation of the present work, is full of Protestant rancor and one-sidedness. But here each element is given in its validity as well as in its inadequacy. The result is curious: Shakespeare has been claimed to be both a Catholic and a Protestant, but he is neither ; he is the Poet who sees in every great struggle two conflicting principles, each of which has its truth and its error, its right and its wrong, yet one of which is supreme. His oath to his genius is: I shall show both sides as they are, by the eternal gods.

No doubt here is witnessed the same contest logically which is known in history as the Reformation. That movement was a protest of Conscience, Family, and State against the crushing formalism of the Church. The result of it was that it established, in a part of Europe, at least, the subordination of Church to State ; it justified

the Family by abolishing celibacy ; it generally upheld the right of private judgment in regard to matters of Conscience. But, on the other hand, the Church is not without its strong justification, and Protestantism is not without its serious weakness. The Poet has taken the precaution to throw the struggle into a period long antecedent to the Reformation, and thus exhibit purely the principles at issue, without exciting the blinding passions of theological controversy which the real event would awaken. Nor are the principles confined to Englishmen. King Philip of France is a Protestant, uttering the protest of Conscience in a far higher sense than King John.

The two armies now fight the battle. England is victorious on all sides. Nationality is asserted triumphantly against France and the Church. The hero of the fight is Falconbridge ; it is his spirit which animates the English hosts. The greatest result of the victory is that Arthur, the claimant of the throne, is taken prisoner. But this is the supreme misfortune of John, and constitutes the turning-point of his destiny. Arthur abroad, supported by foreign foes, is an external danger which unites all England under the banner of the King ; but Arthur a captive, at home, is the object of royal suspicion and popular sympathy. Success is Fate to King John, and is such more or less, to every man. Besides, John has done the deed of guilt, which he has not yet put out of himself.

II.

The trouble now becomes internal — this is just the transition to the second movement. As long as the enemy of the nation supports the heir, the nation supports the usurper in the external struggle; but, when the struggle ends, the usurper must not assail the heir, who also has his right. This is just what John proceeds to do, this is the point at which his character breaks, and the nation begins to totter in its loyalty; hence arises the internal struggle. The theme is nationality against inheritance; the former is supreme, yet the latter has its validity. From disruption within to national restoration will be the course of the second movement, ending in the coronation of a new monarch. Here also are the same two threads as before.

1. The English thread may now be taken up and followed through to the end. John orders Arthur to be put to death, thus abandoning his first support — the nation — and seeking to obtain by crime the title. But thereby he really loses his only claim, for he is not truly a ruler now; and, moreover, he acknowledges by his conduct the superior right of Arthur. But the young prince is not murdered; he perishes in attempting to escape from prison. His character is that of pure innocence and sweetness, to which child-

hood is added ; still, fate has made him the center around which gather foreign war and civil dissension. The life of a guiltless boy thus seems to threaten — at least to disturb — the life of a nation. He would like to divest himself of the struggle by forgetting his origin and turning shepherd, but royal birth makes him a sacrifice. Still, he must be got rid of, and, as he had done nothing worthy of death, the Poet disposes of him by accident. The pathos of his situation results from the sight of an innocent and amiable youth thrust between the shears of national destiny.

There is here a question about the character of Hubert, Arthur's keeper. Did he intend to put out the young prince's eyes, and then yield to the piteous entreaties of the latter? Or was the whole transaction designed by him in order to "fill these dogged spies with false reports?" Hubert afterwards says repeatedly that he never entertained the thought of murdering the child, and we must accept his statement or consider him guilty of prevarication. To burn out the eyes and to kill, are not the same thing; perhaps Hubert intended to do the former, but not the latter. In this manner all his declarations and acts may be reconciled. The question has two sides; still, it comports best with the whole text to consider him a man of noble instincts under a rude exterior, whom even Arthur loved, though

his jailer. The King has simply made a mistake in judging of Hubert's character by his rough appearance — a mistake which Hubert resents both in deed and in word; for he saves the young prince, and declares to John in person, who had really entrapped him into the promise of murder before he knew it,

“ Within this bosom never enter'd yet
The dreadful motion of a murd'rous thought,
And you have slander'd nature in my form;
Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,
Is yet the cover of a fairer mind,
Than to be butcher of an innocent child.”

This passage doubtless gives the true explanation of his character, and is the test by which everything else said or done by him is to be measured.

A great change is now to be observed in the King. He becomes suspicious in mind and dilatory in action; he is plotting to secure the title which springs from birth, and he gives the nation over to discord from within and to invasion from without. He has done a great wrong; guilt destroys his mental repose and undermines his outward activity. His opposition to the Church has also turned into an abuse; he plunders it for money, instead of resisting its political encroachments. The struggle, both with Arthur and with Rome, has been pushed beyond the limit of right into the realm of violation. Such is generally

the case with the conqueror ; he knows no bounds, and he ends by subverting in victory the very principle which he fought to establish. The psychological change and the political change exactly correspond — one reflects the other. Inside the man and inside the nation is a corresponding breach and struggle.

Now comes the reaction against him, which shows itself in two forms — internal strife and foreign invasion. Of the troubles at home, the first is the revolt of the nobles, whose chief representative is Salisbury. The wrongs committed by the King make them disaffected, and finally, the death of Arthur drives them into open rebellion. Thus, however, they fall into as deep a violation as the King — they become the assailants of the nation. Moreover, their conduct is partially based upon a mistake about the manner of Arthur's death. Their wrong is manifest — they would sacrifice the independence of their country to their moral indignation. Conscience now turns against nationality, as, in the case of the French King, it turned against the Church. This is the most modern of all collisions to be found in Shakespeare, for it belongs, in its full development, to our own time ; it gives an expression of the conflict between the individual sense of duty and the authority of institutions. But, in the scope and intensity which it has in

the present age, it does not belong to the Shakespearian world.

The second internal trouble is the dangerous commotion among the people. These acts of John they feel to be destructive of peace and justice; this feeling they express, not in the form of an abstract proposition, but they take the manifestations of Nature for their language. At once the whole physical world becomes the mirror of the political world; the storm, the sun, the moon, the bird, are omens which prognosticate the revolutions of society and the destiny of the individual. Such is the employment of the supernatural appearance by the Poet; it is a mode of expression for what lies vaguely in the feelings. It is not mere superstition; it tells the truth, though darkly and remotely. In this very play Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Pandulph, the man of intellect and not of emotion, a full explanation of his method:—

“No natural exhalation in the sky,
No scape of nature, no distemper'd day,
No common wind, no customary event,
But they will pluck away his natural cause,
And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven,
Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.”

The culmination of this popular feeling is found in the prophet who foretells, in wild and often frenzied utterance, the consequences of national

wrong. Here he is, too — Peter of Pomfret, who has declared that the King will deliver up his crown “ere the next Ascension day at noon,” and who goes through the country “with many hundreds treading on his heels.” It is merely a way that the people have of declaring their deepest conviction that retribution will be visited upon the violator of right, and that the conduct of John merits dethronement — even death. This judgment they read in Nature, and hear from the mouth of the Seer; the justice of this world is the religion of the next.

The King has thus alienated the three estates of his realm — Clergy, Nobles, Commons. He sees the result and tries to make his deeds undone. He seems to repent bitterly of the supposed murder of Arthur; he seeks reconciliation with the indignant lords. But in these retractions he proceeds, not from principle, but from weakness; it is not so much repentance for a great wrong as terror at a great mistake. Then follows his cowardly submission to the Church, in which he surrenders to Rome national independence without reserve. This is the completion of his downward career; he has totally reversed his first patriotic position; he has declared by his act that he is not the sovereign of free England. But the nation will not perish; it has a guardian in the person of Falconbridge, who still is ready and able to protect it against all its enemies, both

foreign and domestic. The King's submission is shown to be utterly fruitless. It does not rid the country of the foreign invader, for Pandulph cannot force the Dauphin to retire; nor does it secure John even against the religious enemy, for a member of the plundered clergy administers to him a fatal draught of poison. Such is this impressive history; it shows the fate of the ruler who begins by maintaining nationality and then sinks to its surrender—he destroys his own authority and logically deposes himself.

2. We may now take up the French thread of the second movement, beginning just after the English victory. It is first to be seen how Constance will endure the captivity of her son. Hitherto she has been the politician, but at present she will manifest the mother. It is not the loss of the throne which now seizes hold of her mind; her ambition is sunk in the terrific violence of maternal grief. She wants to die—rejects all comfort, refuses the religious consolation of the future state, and, ends in madness. Most awful, yet deeply significant, is that passage wherein her sinking reason leads to a disbelief in the restoration of her lost child in Heaven. Only through the imagination can she bring back her pretty Arthur, but to take his image for reality is insanity. Over the rest a veil is drawn; we merely learn of her death afterwards in a fit of frenzy. Hers is a most profoundly tragic

female character, in which the conflict between the political and domestic relation is expressed with a Titanic intensity. But motherhood wins the triumph, yet it is a triumph which costs both reason and life.

The next move on the part of the French is the invasion of England, which is strongly urged by the Legate. He has clearly fathomed the character of John, and partially that of the English people. His sagacity tells him that the King will murder Arthur and thus excite disaffection. His argument seems so plausible that the Dauphin is convinced and makes the expedition, but the conscientious father, Philip, does not appear to have taken part. It will be noticed that Pandulph in these discussions rests his foresight upon general principles, and not upon instinct; he is the man of understanding, and not the prophet. He states the exact ground of French success and of English misfortune; it lies in the captivity of Arthur, which is thus the turning-point of the drama.

The revolted English nobles come to the aid of the invader. Their moral conscience has driven them to abandon their country and desert to its foe. They, when surrounded by French soldiery on every side, feel the torturing contradiction of their conduct; Salisbury, in deep distress, gives utterance to the struggle in his bosom. It causes him sorrow to "heal the inveterate

canker of one wound by making many ;” he feels the bitterness of having to “ step after a stranger” here in his own Fatherland, and to follow the “unacquainted colors” of the ancestral enemy of his people. So the moral man becomes aware of guilt in carrying out his one-sided principle, and conscience has fallen into an utter contradiction with itself. The cause is not left in doubt. He has not been able to see that his duty to the nation is first and supreme ; and this is his contrast to Falconbridge. Hear his defense and judge of it — evil must be done that good may come : —

“For the health and physic of our right,
We cannot deal but with the very hand
Of stern injustice and confused wrong.”

Thus morality has surged over to the support of its direst foe — the so-called Jesuitical maxim.

But the full consequence of the deed is yet to come. These nobles are traitors ; hence the thought is near that they may betray one side as well as another. To the French, therefore, they are objects of suspicion, which is increased by Salisbury’s strong expressions of grief at the state of his country. The Dauphin, too, is by nature inclined to suspect a moral person as not subservient to his purpose. The result is : As they betray, so they are betrayed ; their action is about to be brought home to themselves. They are warned

in season and escape, returning with deep thankfulness to the nation even under that king whom they had before deserted. Let the conscientious but wrong-headed men learn a lesson and be saved, this time at least, saith the Poet.

But now we are to have a final exhibition of the Legate and the Dauphin. John submits to Rome; Pandulph orders the French army to withdraw. The Dauphin, from the obedient son of the Church, becomes, in a breath, its most refractory child. What is the matter? His political interest now conflicts with religious authority, and he, in his turn, has come to refuse subordination to Rome; he is just where John was before. The Dauphin has no conscience; the Church is employed by him simply as an instrument. But Pandulph is truly a comic figure; here his deep policy has swallowed itself. The State which he invoked to subject State to Church very naturally refuses to be subjected itself. This is just the old struggle over again — the Legate is exactly where he began. Such is the outcome of the political authority of the Church; it shows indeed a comic retribution. When the end is supposed to be gained, it is simply lost. Pandulph vanishes, and Lewis declares for battle.

England, therefore, must look for defense to her own stalwart arm. An Italian priest cannot secure national autonomy. Now is the time for the hero to enter and assert his principle. On

the spot he appears, uttering the defiant voice of the nation against France, the Church, and domestic traitors. Falconbridge was deeply disgusted at the submission of John, but that could not taint his devotion to his country. His moral indignation also was intensely aroused when he beheld the dead form of Prince Arthur lying upon the rocks, but he never entertained the thought, for that reason, of deserting to the hereditary foe of his native land. In all his actions there is seen the same adamant fidelity to England, and his extravagant laudation of her valor and greatness comes from his inmost soul. As opposed to the ecclesiastical, domestic and moral person — all of whom are represented in the drama — he is national. This does not mean that he wantonly disregards these other principles, but, in case of a conflict between them and the nation, he goes with the nation.

Under his leadership England triumphs a second time over France, and the kingdom is brought back to internal harmony. Corresponding to this national restoration is the death of the sovereign who was unable to uphold the principle of his country. A new king must begin the new epoch; he is the son of John, and, hence, the conflict between inheritance and possession, which opened the play, is now solved. But, at the same time, it is announced in thunder-tones that the heir must be a ruler; that he must truly

represent the deepest national aspiration; that the loss of birthright shall follow like destiny upon his desertion of nationality. It is the same lesson both in the case of Arthur and in the case of John — the right of succession is valid within its limitation; but, when it conflicts with the right of the nation, it must be set aside. Such has always been the fundamental principle of the English people, though to maintain it has cost many an intestine struggle. The final solution came by taking away from the king political power, so that he could not be the supreme representative of the nation, and leaving him the empty right of inheritance. But this revolution was destined to take place long after the time of Shakespeare. The play ends — the last person to leave the stage is Falconbridge; there he stands, speaking to future England and inspiring it with his own lofty spirit of nationality, as he utters words which stir the breast like the trumpet-call of battle.

RICHARD THE SECOND.

In *Richard the Second* the fundamental theme is the right of revolution. We behold a king deposed, and the grounds of his deposition declared in the most explicit manner. It is manifest that the Poet intended to justify the change of rulers, and thus to show when revolution may be necessary for the welfare — perhaps for the existence — of the nation. The whole action is the story of a king who loses the essential attribute of kingship, and, hence, loses his crown. In English History the royal authority has been often claimed to be of God; Shakespeare boldly puts this religious element also into the conflict, and makes it subordinate to the national principle. Though Richard asserts the divinity of his office and its superiority to any human control, he is still hurled from his throne by the people of England. There is no disguise, no softening of the collision — it is the divine right of Kings against the temporal right of the State. The latter is supreme — is, indeed, the most divine of all things.

Let us note the connection between this and the preceding drama. In *King John* we see the monarch making good his defective title by his

determined support of nationality. He maintains the independence and honor of England against her stalwart enemies—France and the See of Rome. Thus he is the true ruler, and receives the unquestioned loyalty of the people. But he loses his lofty principle of action, namely, the defense of nationality; he submits abjectly to the Church, and the country suffers the ignominy of a French invasion. The change in his conduct and character is complete; he is no longer King, indeed, and we may suppose his violent death anticipated dethronement. The main point to be noticed is that John failed to support nationality against the external powers which sought to subject it; he could not, therefore, remain the representative of the free nation.

In *Richard the Second* it is not a combat without, but a struggle within; it is not the attitude of the king toward foreign States, but his attitude toward his own subjects. The issue is wholly internal, and now the right of the individual becomes the paramount object of interest. But Richard, as well as John, violates the principle of nationality, though in a different manner. The English State can not and ought not to be placed under the yoke of an external power as long as its supreme end is to secure the liberties of the subject. The government which most adequately maintains the rights of the individual will be most strongly pillared in the hearts of the people.

The depth and intensity of national feeling must in the end repose upon the excellence and purity of national institutions, whose highest object may be stated to be the security of the Will of the Person in all its manifestations. Let this be destroyed by a government, then such a government is not worthy of its independence, and the people are not fit to be free.

Here lies the violation of King Richard — he assailed the truest principle of nationality by committing wrongs upon the subject. He refused to be controlled by the law; the institution of which he was the head, and whose end is to secure to every man his rights, was perverted by him into an instrument of the most arbitrary extortion. The very ruler was thus destroying the State, was assailing in its most tender germ the principle of nationality. From being the means of protecting person and property, government in his hands had become the most potent engine of their destruction. Such a king must be put out of the way; the struggle cannot be avoided. The question is: Shall the nation or the sovereign endure? The answer is given in this drama by the deposition and death of King Richard the Second.

But the conflict cannot end here. There are two sides — both have their validity; each party has committed a violation. The title of Richard is unquestioned; his right to the crown is asserted

by that same law for the defense of which he has been deprived of the throne. The wrong of Richard has been punished by the loss of his kingdom, but his punishment has begotten a new wrong, which by the same inexorable logic, must call forth a new retribution. Such a result will take place, but to portray it will far transcend the limits of a single drama. Hence arises the necessity of the Tetralogy, or series of four plays; two such Tetralogies now follow in regular sequence. It ought also to be observed that the king who succeeds Richard is not the next in line of succession. Thus the right of inheritance is doubly violated — the second time without any guilt on the part of the true heir. After two generations of men, and after the original violators have lain long in their tombs, the penalty will come — the most terrific struggle known in English History, the Wars of the Roses, will break out concerning the right of inheritance, and sweep the descendant of Bolingbroke from the throne, and his entire family into the grave. Thus we pass from the Lancastrian to the Yorkian Tetralogy.

But we have at present to consider the Lancastrian Tetralogy, whose logical frame-work should be carefully examined. King Richard is deposed — in undermining the law he has undermined his own throne, which rested upon the law; the consequence of his deed has been visited upon him. But who is to succeed him? Here it is

naturally the man who has been most deeply wronged—who, in his own person, most adequately represents the majesty of violated justice. Thus, a subject has revolted from the king and made himself king; he has obtained the crown by acknowledging and maintaining in arms the right of revolution. The new king has, therefore, called into existence the principle of his own dethronement, and has enforced it as a basis of action for the entire nation. For the conviction of the people must go along with their deed; that deed has been dethronement, and, hence, their conviction is now grounded upon the right of deposing the legal sovereign.

This is the difficulty of all revolutions; they are aimed at the stability of institutions—hence they cannot be very stable of themselves. A revolutionary government is logically a contradiction in terms, for its purpose is to upset government—to destroy that which is established; hence its success depends entirely upon the speed with which it abandons its own principle. Having seen the right of revolution, we now behold the wrong of revolution—a wrong which will be brought home to every country that attempts revolutionizing, even from the most justifiable causes. A nation has to endure the penalty of violation, although that violation may be absolutely necessary to preserve a higher element of national existence. It is a genuine conflict of

principles; both sides are right, both are wrong, yet in different degrees; the ultimate test of their relative worth is the universality of their principle. The chief characteristic of the Historical Drama is that it rises above the guilt and punishment of the mere individual, and shows the guilt and punishment of whole nations and whole epochs, thus manifesting how the deed in history returns to the land with a whip of scorpions, even after the lapse of generations.

The deposition of Richard, therefore, will not end the conflict; revolution has been let loose in the country, and must, in its turn, be put down. It was stated that the act of Bolingbroke is in its nature contradictory of itself; that the dethronement of the king, applied as a general principle, must mean his own dethronement. The logic of the situation at once begins to disclose itself; the very men who aided him in acquiring the crown are just as ready to take it away again. Indeed, they must claim this to be a right of the subject. Thus the government of Bolingbroke inherits rebellion and revolution, which must be put down by force of arms — that is, he is compelled to turn around and undo his own work, counteract his own principle, stamp out the doctrine of revolt by which he ascended the throne. If he is successful, he will restore the nation to harmony, confirm the succession in his family, and solidify the shattered institutions of the land. This is the

great work whose accomplishment is portrayed in the First and Second Parts of *Henry the Fourth*, a truly national poem, whose theme is the restoration of England to internal peace and greatness. Therefore, if *Richard the Second* showed the right of revolution and its success, *Henry the Fourth* shows the wrong of revolution and its defeat. Still, there is one deep, underlying principle to both these works—it is the right of nationality, which at one time hurls the monarch from his throne and at another time tramples into dust the standard of rebellion.

The English nation, united within and confident of its strength, feels an aspiration for its ancient glory. There is nothing to do at home; the national enthusiasm cannot be restrained. Moreover, it finds in a new king a man of heroic mould. Just across the channel are situated the fair domains of France, the hereditary foe of the nation, and a large portion of these domains once lay at the feet of England. The play of *Henry the Fifth* is the last of this first group; it exhibits the spirit of nationality bursting its limits and going forth to subjugate other peoples. It is an epoch of national glory; England has become the proud conqueress; she seems poised on the very pinnacle of fame and prosperity. Thus ends the great Lancastrian Tetralogy, passing off the stage in a blaze of success and patriotic fervor. But at the same time it must not be forgotten that

just here can be traced the source of the unutterable calamities which followed, and which brought on the overthrow of the Lancastrian dynasty. For England, through foreign conquest, is really destroying herself; she is assailing the independence of other nations, and therein is undermining her own principle of nationality, as well as opposing the world-historical movement of modern times, which is to maintain the autonomy of the individual State. She, therefore, is guilty of the deepest wrong against the spirit of the age and against the family of European nations, as well as of a crime against herself; hence bitter will be her retribution. But these considerations will be more fully developed when the Yorkian series comes up for treatment.

The drama of *Richard the Second* may now be unfolded in its details. Its purely poetic merits are of the highest order; in radiant glow of imagery and in fiery intensity of expression it is unsurpassed. It possesses also the national exaltation of the English Historical Drama generally; it lightens with passages of combined patriotic and poetic enthusiasm. Indeed, the leading character may be justly called a poet, whose own misfortunes inspire utterances of deep passion, mingled with the most brilliant hues of fancy. There is a lyrical coloring diffused over the entire work, and as a drama ex-

hibiting action and characterization, it can by no means be esteemed as highly as when it is considered simply as a beautiful poem.

The action exhibits a double change; it is a stream with two currents sweeping alongside of each other in opposite directions. It shows how to lose a realm and how to acquire a realm; it passes on the one hand from kingship to deprivation, and on the other hand from deprivation to kingship. It will, therefore, be manifest that the drama moves on two threads, having as their respective centers of interest the monarch dethroned and the monarch enthroned. The cause of this reciprocal change of situation is the wrong done to the subject by the king; a subject then defends his own rights, which is the right of the nation against the sovereign, and therein makes himself the representative of nationality. He thus takes the place of the king, since the latter is at the head of the State, whose highest function is to secure justice, and not to be the instrument of wrong. That subject, therefore, who, in his own person, supremely represents justice, and vindicates it when assailed, is in truth the ruler of the people. The present drama will simply show this thought working itself into reality.

There are also two movements in the play—the first of which shows the guilt of the king, the second his retribution. Each movement car-

ries along within itself the two threads above mentioned — that of Richard and that of Bolingbroke. The one falls, the other rises; at the point of crossing, in their descent and ascent, lies in general the dramatic transition. First we are made acquainted with the crimes and follies of Richard — the murder of his uncle, the supremacy of favorites, the banishment of Bolingbroke, the expedition to Ireland. The counter-thread unfolds the scheme of Bolingbroke, his banishment and his return, together with the disaffection of the nobles and commons. The second movement exhibits the downward career of Richard to dethronement and death, as well as the execution of his favorites, while at the same time Bolingbroke ascends the throne with the general consent of the realm. Thus the guilt of Richard is punished by that person upon whom he has inflicted a most wanton injury; hence wrong and its retribution make up the whole action.

I.

At the beginning of the play the two threads run together for a while, and then separate. The duel shows the opposing sides, though Richard seems to be playing the part of the mediator. He calls upon his uncle, the venerable John of Gaunt, to bring forward Harry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, who challenged Thomas

Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. The two combatants at once appear, and each gives his statement of the case. Bolingbroke, who is the son of Gaunt and cousin of Richard, makes a number of charges, which seem to be in the nature of indefinite surmises, and which he himself did not seriously entertain; but there is one most emphatic accusation which manifestly embraces the whole ground of the challenge — his uncle, Gloster, was murdered by Mowbray. This deed of blood calls for justice, and Bolingbroke swears that he will be the avenger of his relative. Herein he declares his principle, which he will afterwards carry out in its extreme application. Mowbray easily answers the other charges, but the death of Gloster he hurries over with an ambiguous expression, in striking contrast with his general candor and plainness of statement. Something is the matter, and we shall watch sharply for the true explanation in the future course of the drama.

Richard tries to conciliate the fiery duelists by a little humorous banter, and then by an exercise of royal authority. But both refuse obedience in the most unequivocal manner. Herein we catch a slight glimpse of a principle which was supreme among the feudal nobility. Honor was above everything; if it collided with authority, the latter must yield; the king had no right of command in its realm. The individual alone is the monarch there, and is responsible for both

word and deed. Life belongs to the sovereign and would be readily given at his bidding, but not honor; hence arose the duel, which was a trial above the law. Richard cannot reconcile the combatants, and so appoints a day for the fight.

But, before we proceed to the final result of the contest, we are fully initiated into the motives of all the prime actors. The truth comes out plainly; Richard is himself the cause of Gloster's murder, and Mowbray was at most only his instrument. The entire situation clears up at once; Bolingbroke is striking at Richard through Mowbray; already the wily politician snuffs the future revolution in the air. Hence throughout this duel the real combatants are the King and Bolingbroke. Here, too, is shown the difference between young manhood and old age — between son and father. Gaunt refuses to stir for the punishment of his brother's murderers; though implored by the widowed Duchess of Gloster, he can only leave vengeance to God, who will, in His own good time, bring retribution upon the offenders. Gaunt clearly sees what the conflict involves. Justice invokes him to slay Richard, yet thereby he will fall into guilt himself; his age and disposition lead him to shun such an entangling collision, and leave the wrong to Heaven for rectification. But the son, Bolingbroke, is ready to undertake the struggle, whose consequences will keep him busy the rest of his life. For he can

right the wrong only by doing a wrong, which, in its turn, will call for its penalty.

The preparations for the duel are made in magnificent style; the two combatants leap forth with an eager delight for the fray, and utter mutual defiance. But, just as they are about to engage, the King stops the encounter and declares against both the sentence of banishment. Here Richard appears in his best light; he says that he will not suffer civil strife in his dominions, and that he will remove all cause for internal war. In such combats he beholds the "grating shock of wrathful iron arms," and he darkly forebodes the bloodshed which will hereafter result from feudal turbulence. The young monarch—for he always appears as a youth—does not lack intellectual vision; he will repeatedly manifest the clearest insight into his surroundings, and foresee results far in the future with the inspiration of a prophet. But there is no action corresponding to his intuition; he can neither control himself, nor does he know how to employ instrumentalities to control others. His attempt to subordinate the principle of honor to authority is worthy of success, but his means are utterly inadequate. When we reflect, too, that he was well aware of the ambition and character of Bolingbroke, we fully comprehend how unable such puny hands were to wield the massive tools of government.

Let us now see in what manner the two noble-men conduct themselves under decree of exile. Bolingbroke receives the sentence with a sort of defiant submission. His actions seem to declare that banishment is one of the means of accomplishing his political ambition; he goes but in order to return. The parting interview with his father is somewhat frosty, and suggests dissimulation. It does not, indeed, appear that Bolingbroke had already laid out consciously the complete plan of his future career, but political instinct was urging him all the same toward the throne. Mowbray, on the contrary, overflows with the sorrow of hopeless separation; his punishment is more severe, though less deserved, than that of Bolingbroke, and he plainly insinuates ingratitude against Richard — doubtless with good reason. His beautiful lament has for its burden the loss of the English tongue, which he must now forego in a strange land; it is a sentence which condemns him to a speechless death. His function in the play is thus accomplished; he will appear no more. Though there are some later allusions to him, his part in the murder of Gloster is not cleared up by them, and the first suspicion hangs over him to the last.

With this duel begins the strife which only ends with the Wars of the Roses. It is the prelude which opens a great epoch of internal struggle — a struggle which lasts nearly three

generations, and forms in Shakespeare the theme of two dramatic cycles. Its intensity shows the strength of the disease; the baleful virus of personal animosity and insubordination had permeated the entire body politic. Long will be the fever, deep and oft-recurring the throes of the malady, until the poison is eliminated from the system, and the strong arm of the Tudors, in suppressing individual license, will assail individual liberty, whence will arise a new and almost as lengthy a conflict. But this period lies beyond the work of the Poet. At present we are to witness the transition from feudalism, in which the quarrel of two noblemen could involve the peace of the whole realm, to the modern world, in which the State has brought into subordination the turbulent, though powerful and high-born, subject.

Nor should we fail to notice the redeeming trait of these people; they all are fired with an intense feeling of nationality. Whatever else they may do, they never forget that they are Englishmen. Both the exiled nobles express the same attachment to country; Richard glows with it, and the aged Gaunt on his death-bed sings the praises of England in an unrivaled strain of poetic exaltation. Nationality is the grand swelling theme, in which all discord is swallowed up. This is the sound germ which will sprout into a healthy and vigorous tree when it is fully de-

veloped. Thus distinctly appears even now the national consciousness of England, which is her unifying principle amid all dissension, and the course of her history will be to unfold it into institutions which will give to it an absolute validity in the real world.

1. The two threads of Richard and Bolingbroke, which have hitherto run together, here separate, and will not unite again till the situations of the two men are reversed. We can now take up the part of Richard and follow it through to the end of the first movement. Bolingbroke has departed, but his designs are not unknown to the King, who has "observed his courtship of the common people," and noted with just suspicion his great popularity. "Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench" — an act of condescension whose motive can easily be discerned. Richard draws the conclusion with absolute precision; Bolingbroke acts "as were our England in reversion his, and he our subjects' next degree in hope." The monarch has unquestioned power of insight — here he states the whole difficulty of the future. But what does he do? He furnishes an opportunity to his enemy by banishment; certainly he takes no steps to act in accordance with his knowledge. Indeed, he appears to defy his own judgment by resorting to the most odious abuses of which government is capable, namely, favoritism and extortion.

Richard has almost foretold his own fate; it will now be announced to him in the most emphatic terms by the way of warning. It is the old devoted John of Gaunt, now lying at the point of death, who tells him that his abuse of kingship will dethrone him; that the spilling of kindred blood will receive its recompense. Richard answers the dying patriot with vituperation — even with threats. Next he proceeds to his crowning act of wrong towards the subject — he confiscates the property of the banished Bolingbroke. This deed also is not accomplished without a warning; even the weak-spirited York utters a protest: —

“Take Hereford’s rights away, and take from time
His charters and customary rights;
Let not to-morrow, then, ensue to-day;
Be not thyself; for how art thou a king,
But by fair sequence and succession?”

This passage states in the most direct manner the logical nature of Richard’s deed. The same law which secures to Hereford his property secures to the King his crown. If the King, therefore, disregard that law, he is destroying his own authority. Here we have the thought of the whole play — sovereign and subject have the same fundamental right; if the former tries to ruin the latter, he is really trying to ruin himself, and will succeed in the attempt. Richard thus is strangling his own authority, and — when we

consider that the person who is in this manner elevated by his wrongs into being the representative of the cause of right is the powerful and popular Bolingbroke -- there can be only one result.

Such is the crowning deed of wrong done by Richard ; now follows his crowning deed of folly. He quits England at the critical nick of time, and makes an expedition to Ireland, leaving as governor during his absence the Duke of York — aged, imbecile, and not firmly attached to his interests. The strong outlines of the King's character are now before us. There is a divorce between his intellect and will of a peculiar kind ; he possesses foresight, he comprehends results, but he seems to think that a monarch's conduct is above all guidance through the judgment. What he knows need not direct what he does ; his action is quite the contrary of his thought. Ordinary mortals may be controlled by their intelligence — but is he not sovereign and above all control ? Sunk in pleasure, poisoned by flattery, he has come to believe that in his case there is no responsibility for the deed. This is the Richard of prosperity ; adversity will soon show a new phase of his character.

2. Going back and taking up the thread of Bolingbroke after his banishment, we may observe all the tendencies which conspire to bring him to the throne. In the first place, the circumstances

are favorable — events which he did not control catch him up and carry him forward in their current. But, in the second place, the greater part of the governing influences he did set in motion; though the time was ripe for a change, he caused himself to be chosen as its leader. This deep political purpose is everywhere manifest, and still deeper is his political instinct, which sets him on the right course without his knowing why. It is often very difficult to draw the line between consciousness and unconsciousness in his action, but both his conscious and unconscious methods of working are equally well adapted to the end in view. Nor does the character require any such distinction; indeed, it would be spoiled thereby, for Bolingbroke is to be portrayed as the natural politician whose impulse is as good as, or better than, his reflection. Kingship hovered before him — perhaps darkly — when he challenged Mowbray in order to reach Richard.

He hastens to make the issue; he intends to reap every possible advantage of the murder of Gloster, for whom he appears as the avenger, knowing all the while who is the guilty man. Profound, too, is his dissimulation; profounder, indeed, than he wills it to be, since it is the very marrow of his nature. To conceal, and at the same time to carry out, his design are the two conflicting objects which must be united in his action. His courtship of the people has par-

tially revealed him, though without any evil result, owing to the character of his adversary. But we are mostly left to hover between his instinct and his intention, in seeking to explore the dark depths of his spiritual being. He never soliloquizes, thus manifesting, to a certain extent, an absence of reflection and of self-conscious purpose.

Favored by the people, aided by the nobles who see in his wrong the possibility of their own, Bolingbroke soon comes back to England. The whole manner of his return indicates that it is the result of a deep-laid, well-executed conspiracy, though its details are left wholly to surmise. His hand of cunning is seen in every movement, though that cunning is often purely instinctive. The King is absent in Ireland; the odious favorites run away; the impotent York is left to weather the storm alone. The latter is a character that is half and half — on both sides and on neither; the type of senile indecision. He sympathizes with Bolingbroke, yet will adhere to the King; too weak in body on account of his age for the rough activity of war, he is much too weak in will to prop a fallen kingdom. He has no money, no forces; he goes to his revolted nephew and gives him a sound lecture on the sin of rebellion and ends by declaring his neutrality. The old man, therefore, can do nothing; thus the last hope from any English source vanishes.

Next we hear that the Welsh have dispersed on the rumor of the King's death. It is manifest that Richard cannot control instrumentalities; every implement for defense falls from his hand harmless to the ground, while Bolingbroke manifests the most subtle appreciation of each means of success.

His main supporter among the nobility is Northumberland, who will hereafter play a leading part in the reign of King Henry the Fourth. Northumberland is the representative of rebellion; his life is made up of factious opposition to authority. His principle is thus hostile to all government; he embodies the feudal insubordination to law; his pleasure is in being a king-maker. Such is the chief instrument of Bolingbroke — an instrument which is manifestly as dangerous to his supremacy as to that of Richard. Here we see the future peril which will spring up in the realm, and there is suggested the new conflict which arises from the present conflict. Bolingbroke will first use the rude weapon of rebellion, and then break it to pieces. Indeed, the family of Percy are all here — Northumberland, Hotspur and Worcester — aiding the revolt, a family which will have to be eliminated from the State.

Bolingbroke, in the most unequivocal manner, places himself at the head of the national movement and centers it in himself. He sees precisely

the strong point of his cause, and gives it a forcible expression : —

“ If that my cousin King be King of England,
It must be granted I am Duke of Lancaster.”

His right is the same as that of the King; he is really upholding the law of the realm. But, since he is not allowed to vindicate his claim by judicial process, there remains to him the way of revolution : —

— “ I am a subject,
And challenge law; attorneys are denied me,
And, therefore, personally I lay my claim
To my inheritance of free descent.”

But he purposes much more — in fact, all that lies in his deed; for, if he be the supreme arbiter of the State, then he can only be its ruler. Accordingly he proceeds at once to the work of reform; he condemns to death Richard's favorites — “ those caterpillars of the commonwealth.” But towards the men around him he keeps up his dissimulation; he declares that he has come only for his rights. To the King also he professes the most devoted loyalty, yet at the same time prescribes the conditions of his submission. So profound is his concealment that even his most trusted and active supporter, Northumberland, is not fully assured of his future action. Bolingbroke, therefore, has secured the favor of the nation by maintaining that the king is to guard,

and not to violate, what is legally established, and that the king himself is not above the law, but its creature. Such is the deepest political principle of the English nationality, and with it the subtle Bolingbroke is careful to place himself in harmony.

A subordinate thread is the reflection of the whole struggle in an unconscious form—in the dim, nebulous forebodings of the soul. First is the Queen; she feels that something is out of joint, yet she does not know what it is. She only knows that there is a dull presentiment of evil weighing down her spirits. It is the deep instinctive nature of the wife to feel beforehand what is going to happen to the husband with whom she is so closely bound up in emotion. Moreover, the Queen has seen the throes of the kingdom; she has heard the prophetic warning of the dying Gaunt, as well as the earnest protest of the aged York. She draws the conclusion, and the correct conclusion—not with her intellect, but with her feelings. In like manner the Welsh, the superstitious men of the mountains, have been thrilled with the premonition of impending disaster, and read it in blazing letters inscribed on the face of heaven. So, too, the gardener has felt the throbbing pulse of the time, and, as he looks upon the sprays, weeds, and flowers of his own little commonwealth, he beholds the various manifestations of the political world. Each has

thus a special way of expressing that which is wildly rocking and heaving in the soul of the nation.

II.

Such is the first general movement of the play. The threads of Richard and Bolingbroke again strike together, and cross at this point; the one man is mounting towards kingship, the other descending to death. In the second movement, which will now be unfolded, both their characters will develop latent phases. Richard is to be stripped of his infatuation, and is to be brought to see that even a monarch is held accountable for his deeds at the bar of eternal justice. Bolingbroke will gradually work out of his ambiguous position, and assume both the title and the authority of ruler.

1. Taking up the thread of Richard and following it through the second movement, we shall hear poetic strains of enchanting melody, as one wave of misfortune after another rolls the young King towards the final goal of his destiny. He truly becomes a poet now—like the fabled swan, singing his own death-song. It is a new and unexpected phase of his character, yet by no means inconsistent with what we already know of him. Calamity has opened the sluices of the soul; that sensuous nature of his, which was before sunk in self-indulgence, now comes upon the

grim reality of life and is stricken into throes of passionate despair. Its utterance partakes still of this sensuous element in the man, and its theme is the noblest theme of Tragedy — the Nemesis of the human deed. His intellect, whose penetration was previously noted, remains with him yet, and now rises out of the slough of pleasure on the many-colored wings of the imagination, and looks far down into the future of England with a prophetic insight. The odious tyrant, the ignoble sensualist, the contemptible weakling of the first movement, thus develops the most exalted side of his character, and becomes a personage with qualities highly attractive and ennobling, if not heroic.

But before he begins to descend he is to be placed on the very pinnacle of kingly infatuation; this is his belief in divine right — a dangerous doctrine for English monarchs, as English history abundantly shows. He imagines that his presence will be sufficient to put down rebellion, that his will is God's will, and that he simply cannot lose his throne by any deed: —

“Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.”

The outcome of this doctrine is manifest: The king is not responsible for his action; he is above

the great law of retribution. Moreover, his energy is sapped by such a faith; against every soldier on the side of Bolingbroke he imagines that "God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay a glorious angel." The justice of a thing, the moral quality of an act, do not concern the sovereign who rules over eternal right as over the meanest subject. Early authority, false education, and, above all, poisonous flattery, have inflated him into an immense puff-ball, to be blown off his throne by the first rude wind of adversity. Even the Bishop of Carlisle reproves his extreme reliance on a power external to man, declares that "the means that Heaven yields must be embraced." The good Bishop, though a dignitary of the Church, believes that fate is not religion, and that self-determination in man is the true faith in God. The imagination of Richard has, however, a picture for the situation; he, like the sun, need only appear, when the clouds of revolt will of themselves disperse before his majestic presence. Such is the summit of his delusion.

Reports of misfortune come in rapidly from every side. He hears that the Welshmen, his main support, have scattered in every direction. The King grows pale at the news, but recovers himself when he thinks of his uncle, York. Word is next brought that both old and young, men and women, have gone over to Bolingbroke, and that the favorites have been executed. Finally, when it is announced that York has

joined the rebels, the last prop is taken away; universal revolt has wrested England from the scepter of Richard. What now will be his conduct? His intellect will fully comprehend the situation — his imagination will dress it up in all the brilliant colors of poetry; but his will, his power of action, his ability to recover himself, lies paralyzed within him, smothered in the delicious fragrance of his own soul.

A man who relies entirely on external power must fall into despair when everything goes against him — when that external power shows itself hostile. In express contrast to the religious resignation of Richard stands the prelate, Carlisle, who reproves this very element in him and tries to spur him forward to an energetic defense of his cause. Alongside of the worthy Bishop is the secular man of action, Aumerle, who also seeks to rouse the King from his supineness. But Richard can only fluctuate between the two extremes of his nature — between fatuitous reliance and unmanly despair; there is no internal vigor to buoy up his sinking soul.

Let us take a rapid survey of his acts as he steps down from kingship into the grave. He repeals the sentence of banishment against Bolingbroke — all whose “fair demands shall be accomplished without contradiction.” In the presence of his rebellious subject Northumberland he utters his own humiliation — indeed, de-


clares his own dethronement. Then Bolingbroke appears in person; Richard clearly foresees what is coming; his surrender is absolute: "What you will have I'll give, and willing, too." Of course this is an invitation to take the crown, even if there was no such intention.

But the deeper he sinks in despair the brighter becomes his song; from the ashes of action glows the intense fire of poetry. His fancy has the profusion and brilliancy of a tropical garden; it blooms almost to bewilderment and exhaustion. Still, the spiritual necessity is obvious; he must find relief from his sorrow by casting it out of himself into images — into a long and somewhat labyrinthine gallery of pictures. Such of old has been the need of the bard — in fact, of man; suffering makes the poet and the reader of poetry. Nor must we pass over the prophetic insight which Richard here shows; he, too, knows the consequences of revolution; his intellect is unclouded by misfortune. Rebellion is a monster which eternally begets itself, and whose sweetest food is the blood of its warmest supporters. Tell Bolingbroke, says the inspired King:—

—"He is come to ope

The purple testament of bleeding war;
But ere the crown he looks for live in peace,
Ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers' sons
Shall ill become the flower of England's face;
Change the complexion of her maid-pale peace
To scarlet indignation, and bedew
Her pastures' grass with faithful English blood."

The crown is next brought, and Richard hands it over to Bolingbroke in person, uttering himself the salutation of the new monarch: "God save King Harry!" Thus he crowns with his own hand the usurper, and, as he truly observes, has become a traitor to himself with the rest, for he has given his "soul's consent to undeck the pompous body of a king." But this is not all; he must acknowledge the justice of his deposition — confess his guilt and its merited punishment. "His weaved-up folly" is to be raveled out to the last thread; the believer in divine right is now brought face to face with the opposite right — that of dethronement. He has lost his dignity; he will not keep his name; he is no longer himself. A looking-glass is brought which shows his former face. Its image is flattery; he is not King Richard, and he dashes it to pieces. He has come to see his follies as they are; he has atoned for his wrongs. Deprived of every kingly honor, he is brought to behold his deed in all its nakedness. The world of illusion in which he before lived has vanished, and the world of reality dawns upon his wondering eyes. Responsibility for the deed crushes into his soul, and a new consciousness has arisen; "I see the very book indeed where all my sins are writ, and that's myself." Verily they are burned into his flesh in colossal letters, which can be read in their true meaning by the most unlearned man who looks upon them.



But this is not the end yet. Stripped of his regal robes, he is still to be stripped of his personal freedom; he cannot be permitted to roam through the land as an ordinary person. Royal birth, as it heaps up responsibility, heaps up punishment. He is thrust into prison in order to separate him from society, like a criminal; but he has also to be torn away from the Family, whereby the Queen, too, is hurled into the vortex of suffering. And more yet; his deprivation must be made complete—so he is deprived of life. He is brutally slain in prison. He exhibits courage at the last moment; if he had done so before, he would have commanded more respect, but he would not have been Richard. The hope of life makes him a coward; the certainty of death nerves him to his first act of resistance. There in confinement we see him occupied with his fancies—“studying how I may compare this prison where I live unto the world.” However remote may be such a comparison, still he will “hammer it out.” He possesses not fancy merely—his speech is not a string of images merely—but the whole conception is poetic, and he is gifted also with the higher quality of imagination.

As king, Richard is an utter failure; as poet, he is a complete success. And it is this fact which not only reconciles us to him, but arouses a warm sympathy with his misfortune. Retributive justice looks ugly when smiting down this beautiful

form with its inexorable mace of steel. A weak, sensual tyrant would have been a repulsive object to both the moral and the æsthetic sense; but clothe him in the brilliant robes of the poet, and, though he still must remain morally offensive and be punished according to his guilt, he becomes a true theme for tragic Art. The internal conflict of Richard begins with his descent, and corresponds to the external conflict; as he is hurled down from without, he suffers within, singing in his descent with deeper and deeper glow till the light goes out in the darkness of death.

2. The second thread of the second movement is Bolingbroke's, whose career to the end of the play is now to be glanced at. He has hitherto concealed his real purpose, but the time has come when it must be revealed to the world, and also to himself in a certain degree. The weakness of Richard, who tells him to take the crown, could only confirm him in his secret design. But he was not able to do otherwise, for what security will he have against a repetition of the injury? Here, then, is the difficulty: Bolingbroke is compelled to do a wrong against the king in order to secure the right of himself and of the subject. The penalty must come; the consequences of his violation will be visited upon him, and still more upon the nation which assisted, or at least acquiesced. This is, indeed, the greatest of all difficulties—the tragic difficulty of the world—

wherein a man cannot turn to do a great right without at the same time falling into a great wrong, for which he is bound to endure the punishment. Bolingbroke gets his property, and obtains restoration to his country, but to make them sure he must have supreme authority. This act is the precursor of the Wars of the Roses.

The deeds of Richard's reign are to be undone. The death of Gloster is investigated; it is not clear who was his executioner, and the matter remains undecided. Duelists again appear, as at the beginning of the play, but their differences are made "to rest under gage." Bolingbroke accepts the crown; the only voice heard in protest is that of the brave, clear-headed Bishop of Carlisle, who here presents the side of the wrong done by dethroning Richard. A subject can not pass sentence on his king; it is a violation of human law, and still more of divine law. The noble prelate also utters a prophecy of the terrible consequences of the usurpation; the blood of England shall manure the ground; kindred shall war with kindred;

"Disorder, horror, fear, and mutiny
Shall here inhabit, and this land be called
The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls."

Thus Bolingbroke has his wrong and its retribution held up before him, and the Poet gives the motive for the plays which are to follow.

A slight reaction begins; a conspiracy in which both clergy and laity are represented is formed to get rid of the new king. The plot is discovered through the carelessness of Aumerle by his father, the Duke of York, who at once sets out to inform the monarch. The interest of this little scene lies in the conflict between father and mother — their son is a traitor. The father, maintaining the principle of the State, will bring to punishment his own child; the mother, maintaining the principle of the Family, will conceal his act and protect him. All three ride a race to the abode of the King, who adroitly pardons the son, even against the prayers of York, who shows himself to be an unnatural parent in his superlative loyalty. This form of the domestic collision might be made the basis of a whole tragedy, but it seems not to have been touched upon by Shakespeare in any other play.

The conspiracy is broken up; the lords, spiritual and temporal, who were engaged in it lose their heads, except the bold Bishop of Carlisle; Henry Bolingbroke is firmly seated on the throne of England. But the death of Richard he did not purpose; though he wished him dead, he loves him murdered — the fear of retribution is stronger than the hate of the royal person. The wrong of Bolingbroke is now complete, and he has become fully conscious of it. He declares in deep contrition at the end of the play his own

guilt, whose stain he intends to wash off by a voyage to the Holy Land.

This is, indeed, a prophetic drama. Three leading characters have now prophesied the troubles which are to result from the present usurpation, and thus have pointed to the succeeding plays. The precise nature of the conflict is also foretold: Northumberland, who has deposed a king, will try to do so again; the rebel must then be subordinated to authority. Richard the seer has seen and uttered both the essential circumstances, and the true logic of the future situation : —

“Northumberland, thou ladder wherewithal
The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne,
The time shall not be many hours of age
More than it is ere foul sin, gathering head,
Shall break into corruption; thou shalt think,
Though he divide the realm and give thee half,
It is too little, helping him to all;
And he shall think that thou, which know'st the way
To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again,
Being ne'er so little urged, another way
To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.”

HENRY THE FOURTH.

The entire poem of *Henry the Fourth*, with its two parts, has as its theme the restoration of England to internal harmony. Revolution has been invoked as a principle by the nation; the result is that government itself is in danger of perishing. The forces of society must now be reversed, and made to act in just the opposite direction; the conviction of the people, which has been nurtured to the point of rebellion, must be converted to faith in authority. It is the nature of revolution to be forever revolutionizing, and thus prolonging itself into an infinite series of political upheavals which must end in the destruction of the whole institutional world. We now are to behold a man who can be, not only a rebel chieftain, but also a civil ruler, and whose deepest trait of character is the capacity to transform revolution into the stability of government. We are also to behold a nation which will support such a man in his great endeavor, and whose wonderful political instinct has led it from internal peace to rebellion, but will now lead it back again from rebellion to internal peace with entire safety. It is a picture which every man

of every country can look upon with profit and delight, since it exhibits in their full validity the two highest, yet, contradictory, duties of the citizen — the duty of revolt and the duty of submission.

In *Richard the Second* was seen the right of revolution; the King undermined his throne in undermining the law, upon whose observance it was founded. But in *Henry the Fourth* we behold the wrong of revolution; the King has to put down by force the seditious element which has sprung up from the seeds of rebellion. The subject, however, was too extensive for a single play; the Poet has, therefore, made of it two dramas, both of which have the same fundamental thought. The First Part of *Henry the Fourth* ends with the defeat of the rebels in open battle; in the Second Part they are overreached by a treacherous diplomacy. When the monarch dies, the kingdom is at peace and is quietly transmitted to his son, who becomes King Henry the Fifth.

The First Part of *Henry the Fourth* is to be treated as a play complete in itself, for such the author undoubtedly intended it to be. The most obvious division of it is into the threads, of which there are two. It is not easy to name them, but they may be called the elevated or serious thread, and the low or comic thread.

They are distinguished, not only by their subject-matter, but also by their form. The one clings to the palace and touches only the high affairs of State; the other descends, not to the hovel, but to the brothel, and portrays the negative phases of society. The one is written in the most imaginative verse, the other in the bluntest prose. Moreover, the first thread separates itself into two antagonistic groups, which center around the King and around Percy, respectively, between whom is the great conflict of the play. The second thread is that of Falstaff and Prince Hal. The latter has fallen off from the family of his father and become the associate of thieves and libertines. He is, however, the connecting link between the two threads.

The action has also two movements, of which the first shows the disruption in the State by the conspiracy of the Percys; in the royal family, by the estrangement of Prince Henry; in society generally, by the debauchery of Eastcheap. It is a time of general disintegration, from which a new nation is to be born. The reaction which is portrayed in the second movement begins with the reconciliation of the Prince with his father. The regal household is now united and becomes a type of the country which is to be; even the most depraved classes are whirled into the struggle for nationality by the irresistible spirit of patriotism. The end is that rebellion is defeated and

destroyed in the persons of its two most formidable representatives, Hotspur and Worcester. Keeping these outlines in mind, we may now proceed to fill them up with the details of the action.

I.

In the first movement, we behold, in general, the unfolding of the rebellion, and this rebellion is of two kinds — that against the political order, and that against the moral order.

The Percy group and the Falstaff group are connected in their origin and fundamental character; both are a license springing from a violation of authority, both are a revolt against the social organism in two different ethical forms. The highest and the lowest classes of society are brought together into one drama, each having its own disease, which started from a common germ. The two stories — the conspiracy hatched in the North and the robbery hatched in Eastcheap — have really the same hero, Prince Henry, who puts an end both to the robbery and conspiracy. Hotspur and Falstaff, however different, are yet typical figures, which show the two phases of prevailing corruption — rebellion and immorality. A lack of subordination is their common trait; they have not the self-command which gives victory; both are tragic, while Prince Henry

risers above their limits, into his own triumphant life.

1. In the very first words of the play the monarch congratulates himself on the termination of civil war, and expresses his delight at the future prospect of national harmony. Everything seems to have settled down for the moment into a state of peace. But he has no repose within; there is the consciousness of guilt resting on his spirit, as well as the fear of punishment. He has committed a great wrong in the dethronement and death of Richard, and he knows it; remorse is tearing his soul to pieces. But he has another conviction, which costs him quite as much agony as the throes of conscience — his large observation of life, and, above all, his recent experience with King Richard, have taught him that the first law of this world is the law of man's responsibility for the deed. He has, therefore, the strongest faith in retribution, and it is that faith which haunts him till death, and makes him see in every misfortune the signs of divine vengeance visited upon him for his sins.

The supreme question, therefore, with Henry Bolingbroke is: How shall I free myself from these burning pangs of conscience and obtain reconciliation? He accepts the way which his age had pointed out — he will make an expedition to the sepulcher of Christ in order to gain the precious boon of absolution. Already at the end

of *Richard the Second*, when the feeling of guilt first broke utterance from his soul, he had proposed a voyage to the Holy Land to wash away the stain of his crime. But even here, into this most sincerely and deeply religious part of his nature, the politician intrudes; afterwards he declares on his death-bed that it was his policy to lead the restless and turbulent spirits out of England and give them occupation in a crusade against the Infidel. A double character he bears throughout; it is the result of a conflict between the demands of conscience and the demands of the State — between the moral and the political man. He has a strong instinct to be an upright — indeed, a religious — person; but let him once hear the cry of the nation, then he will employ dissimulation, falsehood, violence — in fine, he will subordinate every principle to the end which he deems to be national.

Another point is worthy of a glance. We see here looming up in the background the great struggle of Europe with Asia, the world-historical conflict of the Middle Ages. It took a religious form — Christianity against Mohammedanism. All the countries of the Occident were as one nation against Oriental supremacy, and England, as a member of the European family of peoples — though lying remote from the scene of the conflict — is nevertheless touched with it, and must

show a slight adumbration of its intensity in her great Historical Poem.

But even while he is talking, the King receives news of warfare nearer home, and a national struggle with surrounding countries seems on the point of breaking out. It is announced that the Welsh have been victorious in the West, and have taken prisoner the English leader, noble Mortimer; 'the tidings of this broil brake off our business for the Holy Land.' Still again comes startling news from the North; the Scots have made a fierce foray on the English border under the ever-valiant Douglas, who, however, has been defeated by the invincible chieftain, young Harry Percy, called Hotspur, son to Northumberland. Thus we drop at once from the remote European struggle into the national conflict — England against her next neighbors, Wales and Scotland. Here is indicated the supreme effort of the English nation in an external direction — that is, the consolidation of Albion, the elevation of England to Great Britain. For it is the true destiny of the sea-girt Isle to be comprehended in one nationality — to be brought under one government; the triad of separate States, warring with one another and struggling for mastery or for independence, must be reduced to unity and peace.

Still, it is not an external conflict with other peoples which is going to be considered in the

play; it is an internal conflict which is impending, and of which signs begin at once to show themselves. "What think you, coz, of this young Percy's pride?" asks the King of his counselor, Westmoreland. The haughty warrior, Hotspur, has refused to surrender his prisoners to the sovereign, except the one captive prince of royal blood, Mordake, Earl of Fife. An act of defiance it was assuredly; but when we learn that Hotspur, according to the custom of war in such cases, had a right to the captives with the single exception mentioned, the affair wears a different aspect. The King has demanded more than his just dues. What can the adroit contriver mean? He must be seeking a quarrel, and now finds a pretext. The suspicion at once darts through the mind that he has already determined to humble the great house of Percy the first moment that he is securely seated on the throne.

This suspicion is confirmed by the hostile feeling of the court against Worcester, another Percy, who, says Westmoreland to the King, is "malevolent to you in all aspects." Now comes the struggle; the audacious Hotspur must be called to an account for his refusal of the prisoners, and the King is forced to "neglect his holy purpose to Jerusalem." Thus we come at the pith of the play. Its theme is not the conquest of heathendom, nor the subjugation of neighboring countries; its purpose is to show the subordination of

the rebellious spirit of the time, and the complete restoration of the country to internal concord. To this end the king-makers and revolutionists must be put down, and the supremacy of civil authority maintained by every appliance of force and diplomacy.

Such is the national phase of affairs as presented at the beginning; but now we are to look at the domestic conflict in the royal family, wherein the King is beheld acting the part of a parent. At the mention of Percy's son, Hotspur, he is reminded of his own son, the wayward Prince Harry, who stands in the most unfavorable contrast to the young lion of the North, for the latter is "a son who is the theme of honor's tongue." It is a most painful thought for the monarch; he wishes "that it could be proved that some night-tripping fairy had exchanged in cradle-clothes our children;" he would like to have Hotspur for his son, inasmuch as "riot and dishonor stain the brow of my young Harry." The alienation between father and son is complete; the young Prince seems to give no promise of worth and talent corresponding to his high position. Herein is the greatest mistake of the King, who, so shrewd in political management, utterly misapprehends the destiny and character of his own child.

The ground of this error in judgment lies deep in the nature of the two persons. The dark, devious subtlety of the father was the reverse of

the open, transparent conduct of the son ; neither could fully appreciate the other. Both, however, were needed at the time — the crafty diplomatist and the bold striker. Without Prince Harry, the King could probably not have succeeded in the present emergency. He had to do with men altogether different from the weak-willed Richard ; the impetuous Hotspur would be apt, at a single dash, to break through all the fine-spun webs of political cunning. But the Prince was the equal of Hotspur in chivalrous bearing and martial fire, and was his superior in prudence. The estranged son must, therefore, be added to the father before the struggle between government and rebellion shall be brought to a successful issue ; neither can be dropped without failure to the cause.

Now the disruption which the King manifestly intended to force takes place. The conflict must come — the sooner the better. Here is the whole family of rebels — the Percys — the living representatives of insurrection. Worcester is the plotter of the house ; he is the man of political cunning, and herein he resembles the King. The latter is charged by him with ingratitude — a charge most true ! The sovereign gives him the answer of power : —

“ Worcester get thee gone, for I see
Danger and disobedience in thine eye.”

The second Percy, Northumberland, is next addressed by the monarch. He is more the medi-

ator than the aggressor; he seeks to avoid a struggle whose danger he seems to fully comprehend. Thus his action is uncertain and paralyzed throughout the whole play — quite different from what it was in *Richard the Second*. He is at present trying to pacify the King concerning Hotspur's denial of the prisoners — an impossible task, could he but see into the workings of the royal brain. The good Blount, friend of the King, not comprehending the latter's plan, offers also to be a peace-maker. Hotspur is induced to make a sort of apology for a hasty speech, but he still proposes to keep the prisoners; thereupon follow strong words and an angry separation. A volcano of impulse is that young Harry Percy; he will after the King, and ease his heart at the hazard of his head. But he is restrained by his father from going, though not from talking; in his wrath he lets out secrets which it is important to treasure up.

The family of the Percys is in a state of deep repentance for their past actions; having been traitors to the last monarch, they are not trusted by the present monarch. Their wrong is now the subject of bitter confession. Richard, whom they were the chief means of deposing, in their memory is "that sweet, lovely rose," for which they have planted "this thorn, this canker, Bolingbroke." They have also lost their fair name among men for the sake of the very person

who has openly discarded them. Still further, they are now forced to make choice between a new rebellion and an abject submission. The important question is: Will they maintain their old principle of revolt, or resolve upon its abandonment?

On another point the political action of the two hostile parties may be compared. The house of Percy has allied itself with Mortimer, Earl of March, the true heir of the English throne, whom Bolingbroke had set aside. It was a bold stroke of policy, and excited the just suspicion of the King. He refuses to ransom Mortimer, who has been taken prisoner by the Welsh, being delighted to keep out of the kingdom such a dangerous competitor. Both sides are manifestly seeking every political advantage, and each is well aware of the designs of the other. But the period for secret intrigue has passed; the conflict must now be settled by an appeal to force.

The wily Worcester, the planner of the rebels, unfolds the scheme, which is certainly skillful. Let the Scotch be sent home without ransom, and thus we shall win the aid of Douglas through favor to his captive son. Let Glendower, too, be gained, in order to give assistance to the claim of Mortimer, his son-in-law. Then Northumberland "shall creep into the bosom" of the Archbishop of York, and other nobles who have grievances are to be persuaded into joining the

conspiracy. The plan is clear — the internal enemies of the King are to be united with the external foes of the nation, and both are to be hurled against the throne. The crime of the Percys is now exposed — they are ready to introduce the foreigner into their domestic quarrels; they do not hesitate to sacrifice their country to their party. Nationality is not their ultimate principle, and, hence, the nation will rise up and smite them to the earth. Of course Bolingbroke was defending his own title and his own interests, but, then, the defense of them coincided with the defense of the institutions of the country.

We are now astonished at learning that this scheme was not a sudden device springing from the present interview, but had long been meditated. Worcester declares that it has already been “ruminated, plotted, and set down,” and that it merely awaits an opportunity for fulfillment. The actual state of the case is, therefore, that the two cunning contrivers on both sides have been maneuvering for a position all the while; each is watching the movements of the other, and now the battle is to be fought, being forced by the King. Worcester at once calls into the field his man of action, the bold Hotspur, to whose impulsive temperament he could not hitherto intrust the great secret. Hotspur is on fire at the word, and longs to dash into the fight.

We next behold this young chieftain in his

family. His wife, Kate, has observed his strange conduct, and insists upon knowing what is the matter. He seems so completely occupied with his own thoughts that he neglects his domestic duties, and hardly pays any attention to what is transpiring around him. His reply to his wife is couched in a strain of humorous banter; still, he loves her, for he teases her. But that intense soul of his leaps out in every act; when awake he moves about in a kind of trance/ and when asleep he is at once charging upon the field of battle. His imagination is as vivid as the flash of lightning; he calls up the great enterprise and rushes through all its circumstances; the outer world dwindles to naught amid the more striking pictures of his own mind. It is the impetuous, nervous character which throws itself into its purpose and quite loses its being in its fierce determination. The same intensity is witnessed in his intellect and in his action; the word which he employs and the deed which he does glow with the same spiritual fire. He can truly throw his soul with its flaming energy into all his undertakings. It is no wonder that his wife becomes jealous even of his dreams, and of the images which withdraw his life from her intercourse and from every occupation.

But here we are introduced into the meeting of the leading conspirators, in which their ambition and their crime are unfolded. Now we first catch

a glimpse of a most notable character "that damned magician, Glendower." He is filled with all the superstition of the mountains of Wales; at his birth the front of Heaven was full of fiery shapes and the earth did shake; supernatural signs have marked him as extraordinary; no man born of woman can hold him pace in deep experiment. The Poet clearly makes fun of his claims, but in respect to Glendower himself there is a mixture of motives. He wishes to inspire awe among his credulous countrymen by such mysterious stories, yet, to a certain extent, he believes them himself. The line between imposture and credulity is left uncertain, yet both are undoubtedly present in his composition. He manifests the wild Celtic imagination which falls into gross superstition; most characteristic, too, are his love and cultivation of poetry; he is thus the conscious maker of mythical lore. In antagonism to these qualities stands Hotspur, with his English understanding, who ridicules all supernatural gifts, and who interprets the wonders of nature into physical causes. But, chiefly, he expresses the most violent dislike of poetry:—

"I had rather be a kitten and cry — mew,
Than one of these same meter ballad-mongers;
I had rather hear a brazen canstick turn'd,
Or a dry wheel grate on an axle-tree;
And that would set my teeth nothing on edge,
Nothing so much as mincing poetry;
'Tis like the forc'd gait of a shuffling nag."

A most poetical description of the hate of poetry ! Hotspur, above all men, is indulging in that which he thinks he despises. He employs throughout the play the most imaginative and intense speech, yet does not know it; but, chiefly, his character and his figure are poetical in the highest degree. He is the instinctive man of action; the deed is his poetry — his creative act; he is the poet in an old sense of the word—the doer. He does not like this artificial singing of a great action as distinct from the performance. Yet, as was said, he has a most vivid imagination, bursting into living pictures; still, it never saps the foundation of his strong common sense, and never degenerates into superstition — into the belief that the figments of his own brain are some divine, supernatural appearance. A poetical figure he is indeed, hating poetry with a most poetical hate.

Now, this man, decked in youth and beauty, gifted with the noblest graces of soul and body, is doomed; he has his sentence written upon his forehead, where it may be read of all men; he cannot subordinate himself to the authority of the State. He is, in fact, the very embodiment of the spirit of insurrection in its most enticing features. There he rides along, lightly reining his fiery steed; what a glowing, heroic appearance! Yet that eye of defiance is turned upon the most sacred interest of humanity. In him the individual is beheld in all his glory and per-

fection, yet also in his supreme weakness. Hotspur will not submit to the institutions of the world; he dashes madly against them — but they are made of something harder than adamant. Beautiful, noble, strong as he is, he must be swept into nothingness, along with every man who cannot subordinate himself to what is higher than himself.

But the great crime of the rebels against the State is yet to be told — it is the division of their country. They meet and parcel out its territory; Hotspur takes a share, also Mortimer and Glendower. The spirit of revolt has now reached its logical result — the dismemberment of England. When it cannot control the whole, it seeks to break the nation into fragments. This is the supreme sin against nationality; rebellion has committed its greatest violation in the disruption of the country. The man who undertakes to rescue the land and punish the offenders may be justly called the savior of the people. Here it is King Henry the Fourth who plants himself in the breach, most gallantly sustained by his son Prince Henry; both are thus the supporters of the spirit of nationality against the spirit of division and destruction. This is their eternal merit, which raises them far above their own shortcomings and far above all the glories of their opponents.

2. It is now time to go back and take up the comic thread, which is so different in style and

subject-matter from the one which has just been considered. Both threads, however, present great violations—the first of institutions, the second of morals. The character which connects these two threads is Prince Henry; indeed, he is the colossal figure which spans the four dramas of the present series, and may be justly called the hero of the Lancastrian Tetralogy. The estrangement between him and his father has been mentioned; he has fled from the court and goes down among the people—yea, among the lowest people. He will be ruler one day. Beginning at the foot of the ladder, he is going to climb to the highest round; he is going to see all, and be all, that his subjects are. It is a dangerous undertaking for everybody except the genius. Let you and me not make the attempt—we can easily fall to the foot of the ladder and roll into the mire of the ditch; but can we get up again? A hazardous experiment; let us not try it.

Prince Henry becomes the associate of thieves and drunkards, and worse; but it is noticeable that little or no taint seems to be left upon him. He is not a thief; he can hardly be called wicked or dishonorable. He stands here wonderfully aloof from even his own deed. It is a strange situation. What he does is felt to be outside of his true nature all the time. His controlling impulse now seems to be the love of sport; it makes no difference how wild or foolish may be the ad-

venture, he is ready. Entertainment he is bound to have — too little solicitous, according to modern notions, about the means and about the kind.

But the deeper possibility of his character is also hinted at here in the beginning. He is aware of the foulness of these men who surround him; he knows, too, the waywardness of his own life. Hence his present career is the result of deep purpose; his act is through and through a conscious one, but we must not for this reason think that he took no pleasure in its performance. He declares in his soliloquy at the beginning that he employs this method in order to “show more goodly and attract more eyes” after the reformation of his conduct, which he most sincerely intends. He feels already an absolute adaptability to his situation. When war comes, he will be the supreme soldier; when he ascends the throne, the supreme ruler; but now, in the tavern, he is the supreme reveler. This is enough concerning him for the present; let him rather develop himself along with the action of the play.

The chief means which the Prince employs for his amusement is the most entertaining character in all Literature — the jolly Fat Knight, Jack Falstaff. This is the pith of their relation — Falstaff furnishes the fun. Quite impossible is it to analyze him in much detail; that humor of his — fine, mist-like, intoxicating moisture of the

spirit — is apt to evaporate in the process of decomposition, and leave something very dry. Certain general statements may, however, be made. Falstaff is the embodiment of sensual gratification ; there is no moral subordination in him for the control of appetite. His intelligence is of the quickest and keenest, but not profound or comprehensive. It is not great enough to make him a villain ; its superiority lies in its rapidity and dexterity. Then there is that stupendous capacity for every kind of animal pleasure, for the eye clearly figured in his enormous body. He has himself indicated the connection : “Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and, therefore, more frailty.”

Falstaff, therefore, has the highest quality and the lowest quality of man rolled up together in his character, without the mediating principle of morality. He possesses the brightest intellect on the surface, but the most brutish sensuality is lying at the foundation. There the two elements are, interpenetrating throughout that unwieldy bulk, furnishing a most rare incongruity — enough to cause inextinguishable laughter among the happy gods. But it must be confessed that there are not a few people for whom the characterization transcends the limits of the Comic, and the spectacle becomes disgusting — the head of man on the body of a swine. Nor is it difficult to see that the person who holds to morality as the

supreme principle can take little pleasure in Falstaff, for the Poet has left out just this quality, and made the omission the main ground of the comic contrast and incongruity.

Still, the Fat Knight, as he has an observing, keen intellect, knows of morality as a guiding principle of mankind. Whatever else may be said about it, he is well aware that it is a belief or a custom in the world, and that it has passed upon him the severest condemnation. At times he talks of adjusting himself to its behests, and of becoming an honest man in the estimation of society. But the truth is, he has no moral instinct — no feeling which impels him to a change of life. He speaks of religious duty, yet he cannot be serious about the matter if he do his best; he often declares that he will repent, and is called by one of his companions Monsieur Remorse, but his resolution sounds like a jest, and he quickly passes from “praying to purse-taking.” Repentance with him can only be a matter of knowledge, or of observation; it does not descend into his emotions and drive him amid tears to undo his guilty deeds, and remould his foul, contorted character. Falstaff cannot, therefore, truly repent. He has no moral instinct; his possessions are — intellect on the one hand, senses on the other. His spontaneous impulse always tends downward into the slough of sensuality.

But his chief pretense was the pretense of courage, and the question has been much discussed whether or not Falstaff was a coward. The critics have arrayed themselves in two opposing lines of battle on the subject, and it must be granted that not a little can be said in favor of both views. Either side, by itself, is wrong, and of course one-sided; the truth is the harmonious synthesis which can be seen by going back to the central germ of the character of Falstaff. Courage was the pride of the country, and especially of the noble class; he well understands that it is the virtue in the highest esteem. But, again, he has no inner impulse to courage, nor to any other virtue; intellect tells him that it is a very desirable possession, yet a courageous instinct he assuredly has not. Thus at times he seems to be brave enough, perhaps, but his tendency is to unmitigated cowardice. He naturally gravitates towards the slough, though his understanding holds him up a little.

But the most difficult point in his character is centered in the question: Is Falstaff conscious or unconscious in his conduct? Here, again, two diverse opinions may be, and have been, held, both being founded on good reasons. It has been maintained on the one hand that he — pursuing his own deep purpose — is the consummate actor, and on the other hand that he unwittingly falls into his monstrous lies and contradictions.

The truth is, both elements are present, yet it is hard to draw the exact line of demarkation, as in the case of so many of Shakespeare's characters. Yea, in regard to the mighty Poet himself, who can point out the boundary between his conscious and unconscious procedure? Many rules of his Art he kept before his mind, distinctly formulated, and followed them; indeed, we can, in some cases, trace their growth from dim impulse into clear knowledge. He had far more system than people generally will allow; he mostly knew what he was about. Still, it must be granted that he possessed an enormous reserve of poetical instinct, which sometimes heaves up like a new-born mountain — from whence, one knows not; but he had also an intellect equally great in its realm. The most that one can do is to examine his works, discover their law — for it must be discoverable — and, pointing it out to others, say: Open your eyes; there it is. That he was aware of the law of his own composition is often probable, always possible, never capable of absolute demonstration; but, still, he wrote by it — that is the certainty. Let us find it first, if we can; afterwards we may hunt for the line between his consciousness and unconsciousness.

In regard to this question about Falstaff, turn back to his spiritual principle as already given, and the key will be found. He has a keen intellect. He must be aware, for instance, that his

portentous lies will be found out; that, in fact, on the spot they deceive nobody. He is entertaining the Prince; he is acting with great success, one thinks. But also he is entertaining himself; his pleasure is in falsehood — he revels in it as in the most delicious luxury; a lie is sweeter to him than a cup of sack. As before remarked, there is no moral instinct in him; even his wit is the slave of his senses. Now we may comprehend the man. The comic character is one that pursues an absurd end — some delusion or insubstantial specter. Falstaff is in himself the essence of all delusion and untruth — a rational man, yet acting with conscious irrationality. Not only does he know what he is, but he wills to be what he is; true only in his falseness, he has attained a serenity which marks the culmination of Comedy, namely, the voluntary comic character. Thus all his contradictions may be fully harmonized and explained.

Around Falstaff is gathered a wild company — the merry lads of Eastcheap, who serve mainly to fill up the background of the picture. They compose the dangerous class in a community; it is the negative element of society. These people are in bold opposition to laws and institutions; they live in open violation of all that conscience and duty demand; thieving, lust, gluttony, drunkenness, debauchery of every kind, are their common traits. They hardly deserve to be sep-

arately mentioned, though the Poet has individualized them all in a few bold strokes. The thought is near that this social corruption is the result of the political diseases of the last two reigns — is the moral consequence of revolution and rebellion. Institutional violation in the higher classes, sinking down upon the common people, bursts the barriers of self-restraint, and lets in the flood of moral violation over the whole country.

But even this group of the lowest vagabonds, the nethermost layer of society, is to be absorbed into the great struggle for nationality which is about to take place. The means for uniting them with their country and elevating them into a patriotic activity is Prince Harry, who is down there with them, and knows them. The startling news of rebellion breaks in upon their revels, just after that wild and inimitable adventure at Gadshill; word is brought that Hotspur, Douglas, and Glendower are up in arms against the government — three such enemies as the world could not pick out again, as frightened Jack intimates. Still, the sport must not be interrupted; the Prince acts with Falstaff a play whose theme is his interview with his father, the King. What can be said of such conduct at such a time? It seems like hopeless fatuity, but the end shows rather that it is the most perfect presence of mind in both; Falstaff is acting for himself, while

the Prince is taking notes. The fact is also to be observed that the Prince shows he fully understands the moral perversity of Falstaff's character, and applies to "that bolting-hutch of beastliness" the most pungent epithets. Falstaff feels the sting of the reproaches and defends himself: "If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know of is damned." He also well knows his strong hold upon the Prince through his powers of entertainment: "Banish plump Jack and banish all the world!" But this banishment is what is now going to take place gradually; already, beneath his merry exterior, the Prince is meditating a separation and a complete change of life.

The time has arrived when the scene which was given in caricature is to transpire in reality — father and son are alone together. Both show their true characters in this trying interview. The King, with the consciousness of his guilt ever weighing him down, beholds in the waywardness of his child the punishment of Heaven. Out of his own blood he fears that a scourge is breeding which will avenge the crime against Richard: "As thou art to this hour, was Richard then when I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh." This is the hideous picture which rests on the air wherever he turns his eyes. The image of retribution could not be stronger or more direct. Here, too, is the manifest instrument at hand — the valiant

youth, Harry Hotspur, who has filled England with the fame of his deeds. The contrition of the King breaks open the hard political crust which covers his soul, and through the crevices we see the red fires glowing beneath, intensified by his belief in a divine judgment for the wicked deed:—

— “Thou dost, in thy passages of life,
Make me believe that thou art only mark'd
For the hot vengeance and the rod of Heaven,
To punish my mistreadings.”

But even from this most solemn hour of his life, and from this most sincere utterance of his heart, political cunning cannot be excluded. Accordingly, in the same breath he begins to give the young Prince a lesson in artful dissimulation; he tells with evident relish by what shrewd stratagem he won the crown, and by what foolish guilelessness it was lost by Richard. His chief complaint is that his son disregards all those subtle maxims of deep policy, and is too open, free and familiar with the people. Such are the two men; it is no wonder that they could not get along well together.

The father and son are, however, reconciled; this is the turning point of the drama, as well as of the Prince's career. He says nothing about adopting the crafty political maxims inculcated by the parent—he clearly will have nothing to do with them; but an open, free-handed fight

with the gallant Hotspur can alone sate the hunger of his ambition : —

— “ For the time will come
That I shall make this northern youth exchange
His glorious deeds for my indignities.
Percy is but my factor, good my lord.”

All the honor which Hotspur has hitherto obtained, Harry will take at a single blow. His soul fires at the thought — he is a new man; with new endowments, he leaps into his saddle like a winged warrior from the clouds: —

“ I saw young Harry — with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd —
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat
As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.”

Such is the first movement of the play. The great rebellion has unfolded into reality; the King on the one side, and the Percys on the other, have rushed to arms and are preparing for the final desperate struggle. But the royal family is now united; father and son combined present an unconquerable front to the foe, and the people, even to the very dregs, are with them.

II.

The second movement is next to be developed, which is the suppression of the rebellion by

force of arms. In general, there are the same threads as before, but that of the comic characters is most intimately connected with that of the King, since Falstaff and his associates are absorbed into the great national struggle and carried along in its current. The thread of the rebels, therefore, stands at present in direct conflict with the two preceding groups. Following in these lines, a rapid survey is sufficient, as the motives have already been fully elaborated.

1. The first thread will now have two strands, both giving phases of the nation in opposition to the rebellion. The highest and lowest classes of society unite and put down revolt, thus settling the national question; but the moral question remains unsettled — a problem for the coming time and the future ruler.

(*a.*) King Henry is informed of every movement of the enemy; he organizes his army and hastens forward to the field of battle. But first he seeks the way of reconciliation; he offers to redress all the grievances of the Percys and grant them pardon for past offenses. Now follows a discussion in which both sides state the ground of their action. Hotspur to the messenger Blunt, and afterwards Worcester to the King himself, seek to justify their course on account of the treatment they have received at the hands of the monarch. Here the Poet explains the collision of his own play; the one party charges treachery

and ingratitude, the other insubordination and rebellion. Now, both accusations are true; both sides have committed great wrongs — both, too, have a justification for their conduct. The King has been guilty of perjury, dissimulation, ingratitude; in fact, he was the first to perpetrate the crime which the Percys have learned from him, and for which he is now seeking to punish them. It is his own deed which rears its hideous shape before him: —

“ We were enforc’d for safety’s sake to fly
Out of your sight, and raise this present head;
Whereby we stand opposed by such means
As you yourself have forg’d against yourself;
By unkind usage, dangerous countenance,
And violation of all faith and troth
Sworn to us in your younger enterprise.”

But their own crime is greater — they are compassing civil war and national murder. Rebellion is the charge of the King against them, and it gives him the supreme advantage. He is thus the supporter of the nation, since the Percys revolt, not for a national, but for a personal end. Still, the King, in executing his great purpose, falls again into guilt. In his conduct we witness the old conflict between the political and the moral points of view; the crisis has arisen in which moral obligations stand directly in the way of the life of the country. It is the first national duty to exterminate the Percys, together with their prin-

ciple; only thus can revolt and anarchy be suppressed; the State, to be at all, must be supreme. Rebellion is a fiend still darkly lurking in the land; it has been victorious in the previous reign, and it is yet a power in the government which threatens to be greater than the government.

To be sure, Henry owes to these same Percys his throne, but that cannot alter the national situation; it is his political necessity to put them down without mercy, though it be an act of faithlessness and ingratitude. If Henry wishes to play the moral hero — if he wishes to sacrifice the destiny of the nation to his individual scruples — he has no business sitting on that throne; let him step down and out. You and I might prefer the part of the moral to the national hero; we might let a country intrusted to our hands go to destruction rather than violate a single ethical precept, *but we would not be without guilt*. It is an ugly choice, but it has to be made, and made, not with half-hearted indecision, but with unquenchable flaming energy. It is a choice which creates the Great Character in poetry, and decides the Great Man in history. Still, an ugly choice, for whichever side be taken, it hurls the chooser into violation and consequent retribution.

No peace is, therefore, possible without the eradication of the element represented by the Percys; the two diplomatic men see that diplomacy is at an end.

Here, now, speaks up the valiant Prince Henry when there is to be a fight. He proposes to settle the difficulty by single combat, in order "to save the blood on either side," and so he challenges the antagonist always before his eyes — young Hotspur. Thus the two champions are picked out for a personal struggle, but this could not possibly be any permanent settlement of the national conflict. Their encounter, therefore, does not take place in the form of a private duel, but it will transpire in the general engagement, which always selects its own heroes.

(b.) The group of revelers may now be looked after. Falstaff has obtained a charge of Foot; Bardolph is sent off as a messenger; Poins is also employed. It is the Prince who gives them all some occupation; they can perform some service for their country. Thus the lowest class of society, whose spirit is negative to civil order, is infused with a noble motive; the immoral man may still be fired with the feeling of nationality. Elevation there is in that, and much hope, when the sunken individual can offer his life for the Higher — can sacrifice himself, not to the Beast, but to the God within him. So the wild revelers of Eastcheap are removed to a new field of activity; their Prince has bound together the high and the low, the good and the bad, in the one great purpose of national unity and supremacy.

But Falstaff shows the two contradictory ele-

ments of his character throughout this part also. His shrewdness does not fail him, nor does his sensuality. There on his march is seen the inevitable bottle of sack; but his roguery has opened the richest vein of peculation in what may be called the "substitute business." He says himself that he has "misused the king's press damnably." The result is, he has collected a band of ragamuffins of whom even he is ashamed; "unloaded all the gibbets" along the road; they are the cheap purchase of conscript money. The instrumentalities of government become, in the hands of Falstaff, the means of the foulest corruption; whatever he touches seems at once to be infected with his own moral taint, leaving out the one supreme exception already mentioned. Still, it is such a soldiery as best corresponds to such a character; it were bad to place under him a body of substantial citizens. Thus we catch a lively glimpse of Falstaff as Captain.

Again, just before the battle, we have another short look at him, saying over what he calls his catechism of honor. It is only a new phase of his double nature. Here in the two armies before him he beholds the principle of honor in all its intensity, culminating in the two heroes, Prince Henry and Hotspur. His intellect comprehends its power among men; he would like to possess it on certain accounts, but he has no impulse of honor in his soul; it can give no

gratification to the senses ; it is "insensible even to the dead." His conclusion must follow: "Therefore, I'll none of it." It is a mistake to consider his attitude toward honor as the central point of his character ; it is only a single manifestation alongside of others which possess equal significance.

Finally, on the field of battle he must be seen ; here he comes all alone in a way that looks very much like skulking. In excuse of his solitary appearance he says that he has led his ragamuffins "where they are peppered ; there's not three of my hundred and fifty left alive." He is, therefore, the sole survivor, except possibly one. This monstrous lie, so characteristic of Falstaff in lauding his own valor, has been cited by simple-hearted commentators in proof of his courage — a joke as good as any of Falstaff's own. Prince Henry comes rushing along and reproves his idleness, when he begins lying again. Douglas darts upon him for a fight ; he falls down and pretends to be dead. But his crowning falsehood is when he picks up the lifeless body of Hotspur as a trophy and carries it to the Prince who had slain him, claiming a great reward. Here he knew that his lie could not deceive, but his impulse to tell it and act it is all the same. His cunning frames the monstrous plot ; he has no feeling of shame, honor, or truth to suppress its execution. The central thought of his character

may be mentioned once more. He possesses the intellect of the man on the one side, the senses of the beast on the other, without the correcting principle of morality.

2. It remains for us to glance at the thread of the rebels in the second movement. The characteristic of it is internal disagreement and separation, while on the side of the King the tendency has been to unification and harmony. Hotspur, Worcester, and Douglas are on hand ready for the conflict, but Northumberland and Glendower are wanting. The great question is: Shall a battle be risked under the circumstances? There are two diverse opinions, but the intemperate Hotspur carries his point against the cool-headed Worcester, after warm discussion. Here is seen the inherent result of rebellion: It cannot be united in itself; it must ultimately rebel against itself. Northumberland craftily slips out of the conflict, which from the beginning was against his judgment, and leaves his son to perish. Glendower, with equal guile, stays away, hindered by unfavorable prophecies. The cause of the malcontents is thus sinking through its own logic; but the cause of united England has unified its supporters — in the family and among the leaders of the King there is no withdrawal, no discussion.

But the culmination of the struggle is the combat between the two youthful heroes, Hotspur

and the Prince. Each represents what is truest and noblest of his party ; each possesses the most brilliant and attractive qualities of mind and body. But one must perish, for they are the bearers of contradictory principles which will endure no compromise. The Prince recognizes the irreconcilable hostility of their deepest natures when he says that our England cannot brook the double reign of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales. Hotspur falls, and deserves to fall. Never was there a more glorious embodiment of honor, valor, chivalry ; he rises up before us as an ideal shape, endowed with all the gorgeous fascination of the knightly character, and in his death the star of the Middle Ages seems to have gone down forever. But he had a trait which blasted all the noble fruitage, and which made it necessary for the tree to be dug up by the roots — he knew no subordination to country. The Prince is the great supporter of that which Hotspur assails ; hence he stands forth as the national hero. He has slain the mighty man of the opposite side, the supreme embodiment of defiant rebellion. All the personal glory which clung to Hotspur from his former successes now passes to him, together with the additional honor of his present victory. The drama concludes ; the Prince of Wales stands out in colossal lineaments as the triumphant champion of nationality ; his father looks forth from the background while Percy is lying at his

feet — young Harry is now the man of the future. Once more, at the very end, the same chord is struck which we heard at the beginning — a chord which rolls and echoes through the whole work, unifying its multifarious music into one grand symphonic utterance: —

“Rebellion in this land shall lose his sway.”

And we are to see that Percy and Falstaff are both rebels — one to the institutional, the other to the moral order. Their outer appearances signify their characters — the chivalrous, dashing, uncontrolled Hotspur, and the fat, sensual, self-indulgent Falstaff. Prince Henry partakes of both, without the excess of either, he is their synthesis into a higher character.

The inferiority of the Second Part of *Henry the Fourth* to the First Part is universally conceded. Several of the most attractive figures in the latter play disappear now entirely; others fall off in strength of delineation; while the grossness increases both in quantity and degree. It must be confessed that the texture of the whole is woven of coarser materials than that of the First Part. The structure of the work also is less happy. There is ample variety, but this variety is by no means fully transfused into unity. In the elevated thread there is an attempt

to compass too much; hence occur gaps and omissions which hurt the total effect. In the low thread a detail of scenes and persons is given which borders on the repulsive; too much is here brought before us instead of too little. Still further, the two main threads might be made to have a more intimate connection.

Nevertheless it is Shakespeare's, in a high, though not in the highest, sense; characterization, wit, imagery, language, betray the hand of the master. The structure, too, is Shakespearian, though by no means so decidedly marked as in some other plays. Two general movements may be distinguished in the total action. The first movement portrays the elements hostile to the existence of social order; this hostility has here two forms—the one being an assault upon the political fabric, the other being an assault upon morality. Rebellion seeks to undermine authority without, and sensuality to destroy manhood within; the realm of institutions and the realm of conscience are equally assailed. The destructive sweep of this movement thus includes what may be called the objective and subjective worlds in some of their most important phases. The second movement shows the restoration of both the institutional and the moral elements in the accession of a King who has elevated himself to be their chief representative. The whole action, therefore, exhibits the transition from a period of political disintegration and social corruption to

the new era of national happiness and elevation embodied in the new monarch.

It will be noticed, too, that in this play also there are two threads running alongside of each other, which were previously called the elevated or serious thread, and the low or comic thread. In the first is depicted the political struggle; hence it separates into two parties the supporters and the opponents of the government. The second thread has as its central figure Falstaff, and portrays the moral depravity of the time. In the end, Prince Henry renounces Falstaff and adheres to the Chief Justice, an adviser of quite the opposite character. This indicates not only a change in the Prince, but also a change in the period — a change from corrupt practices to fair dealing on the part both of individual and of government. Rebellion is not to be put down by wanton violation of good faith, such as Prince John was guilty of; private character is not to be typified in Falstaff. King Henry the Fourth is too deeply infected with the time; he cannot pass into the promised land. He was tainted with political crime in early life, and with moral violation in his later years. He, therefore, cannot introduce the coming epoch.

I.

The first movement unfolds very fully the deep disease of the time in its two forms — rebellion in the State, and corruption in Society. These

maladies accompany all revolutions, which must loosen the social ties, must assail the political and the moral convictions of men. The established order has to be shaken and even shattered to make any revolution, even the most just, a successful fact in the world. The result is, the outer restraint of Law and the inner restraint of Conscience are equally broken, and have to be mended with infinite pains. Both breaches sprang from the successful revolution of Bolingbroke, which, though necessary, had to pay the bitter penalty for what it was forced to violate.

Both the institutional and moral disorders are in Henry Bolingbroke himself and he knows it. The spirit of the time as well as the leading characters are fathered by his primal deed, whose consequences run through the whole Tetralogy. He was the successful rebel, behold Hotspur rising up in the North, and others of less note afterwards ; he was the violator of moral ties — fidelity, loyalty, veracity — behold Falstaff and the revelers of Eastcheap sinking into uncontrolled license. Out of King Henry's soul the two threads of the drama are spun.

1. Picking up the first thread as divided into opposing parties, let us proceed to consider the rebels, of whom there are two groups — one around Northumberland and one around the Archbishop of York. Northumberland lies at his castle pretending to be sick, but is really waiting to

hear the result of the battle at Shrewsbury. Rumor at first flatters him with a favorable report, but soon turns bitter with truthful news. His son, Hotspur, has been defeated and slain; his brother, Worcester, is a prisoner; the cause of rebellion is lost. At once he throws off the disguise of sickness, and is ready to rush headlong into danger. His first impulse is to unite with the other malcontents and continue the war, but, when he has had a little time to cool off, he easily lets himself be persuaded by his wife and daughter-in-law into taking flight for Scotland. He never seems to have entered heartily into the rebellion against Henry the Fourth; it was clearly against his judgment. Hence his activity was paralyzed — not so much from cowardice as from lack of confidence in the enterprise. His part was by no means a manly one, yet it can hardly be called treacherous; he had the foresight to look for reverses and save himself. Quite different does he appear in *Richard the Second*; there he is the boldest and most active among the supporters of Bolingbroke. The change is to be accounted for by his distrust of the success of this second rebellion.

The three Percys have now run their course; they are the Rebel Family in the fullest sense of the expression, and represent one side of the conflict which forms the leading theme of the Lancastrian Tetralogy. They are all filled with the spirit

of rebellion, yet each manifests it in a different phase. Worcester is the crafty intriguer, whose delight is in plotting — plotting for the pleasure of the thing rather, since sound discretion would have dictated the opposite policy. But he was met by a man — Henry Bolingbroke — compared with whom he had not learned the rudiments of political cunning and dissimulation. The noblest of the Percys is Hotspur — open, generous, chivalrous; he is quite the reverse of his uncle, and even of his father. His counterpart on the other side is the young Prince Harry. Northumberland has clearly the soundest head of all the family; he is not victimized by his own cunning like Worcester, nor by his own rashness like Hotspur. His character falls between the two, and his fate is that of a man who cannot support, and who cannot refuse to support, a hazardous enterprise. It is worthy of notice that the two sons, Hotspur and Prince Henry, resembling each other in many respects, have characters quite opposite to those of their fathers.

The second group of rebels is gathered around the Archbishop of York. They are discussing the question of continuing the war; some have hope, others are doubtful. When, however, the statement is made that the King's forces are divided and his coffers are empty, the Archbishop boldly decides on fighting. His grievance seems to be mainly personal — the death of his brother;

but he introduces a new element into the struggle, whose power is by no means to be despised. He gives the sanction of God to rebellion; "he turns insurrection to religion" by virtue of his holy office; he governs, not merely the bodies, but the souls of his followers. Hitherto the conflict was only political; now the church is drawn into it, partially at least, and resistance to the State receives the approval of Heaven. But this element, too, must sink before nationality, which is here asserted above all other principles. The clergy were hostile to King Henry the Fourth from the beginning, and formed conspiracies against him; hence religion, as sanctioning rebellion, must pass under the yoke. Had there been full co-operation between the political and clerical insurgents, the trouble would have been far more serious; but revolution has always an inherent tendency to revolutionize itself.

We now pass to the side of the King. Not much is told of his preparation against the remaining army of the revolters. The general disposition of his forces after the battle of Shrewsbury is, however, indicated; a part moves against the French, a part against Glendower, whose death also is rumored, but the main work falls to the share of the troops under Prince John and Westmoreland, who are sent against the Archbishop and Northumberland. It is this last division of the royal army which is of any inter-

est for us hereafter. Prince Henry, notwithstanding his recent services, does not participate in the final struggle; he is passing through a different ordeal — through a spiritual fire, which is to burn him into moral purity. It is also well that he has no share in the monstrous breach of faith through which the rebellion comes to an end at the hands of Prince John.

But what of the King? We are introduced into the palatial chamber at night; there he sits, worn, haggard, diseased, seeking in vain a little repose through sleep. The poorest of his subjects enjoys the sweet boon of which he is deprived; care and remorse are feasting on his very soul; he can rest no more. The internal struggle now rises into prominence — indeed, takes entire possession of the man. The fear of retribution glances out startled from that pallid face, from that feverish eye; broken in mind and body, he gazes terrified at every occurrence, expecting that his turn has come in the revolution of the times, which “make mountains level and the continent melt itself into the sea.” He looks backward and beholds: How rapidly have men risen and then sunk down forever into night; are not we sinking, too? “The body of our kingdom — how foul it is; what rank diseases grow, and with what danger near the heart of it?” But what most troubles him is that prophetic warning of

Richard's to Northumberland, now turned out true: "The time will come that foul sin, gathering head, shall break into corruption." Here it all is. Nor should the reader forget to note that this is the most important of all the links binding together the Lancastrian Tetralogy. Yet into this most serious of all possible moods the dissembler thrusts himself; as, when speaking of his seizure of the throne, the King says, in repentant strain: —

— "God knows that I had no such intent,
But that necessity so bowed the State
That I and greatness were compelled to kiss."

Still, we must remember that he was not fully aware of the depth of his own guile; the line between conscious intention and unconscious impulse is hard to be drawn in his character. He was, however, a dissembler by nature; he did not need to think to be one. Thus that deed of wrong done to King Richard is the specter which is haunting him day and night, and which makes him writhe in the agony of terror, and sweat, as it were, huge blood-drops of remorse.

Now follows a most important passage. Warwick, in trying to comfort the excited mind of the King, is led to account for Richard's wonderful gift of foretelling the future. Here is stated the rational principle of all prophecy, and, at the

same time, the innermost thought of this Tetralogy : —

“ There is a history in all men’s lives
Figuring the nature of times deceas’d;
The which observ’d, a man may prophesy,
With a near view, of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life; which in their seeds
And weak beginnings lie intreasured.
Such things become the hatch and brood of time;
King Richard might create a perfect guess
That great Northumberland, then false to him,
Would of that seed grow to a greater falseness,
Which should not find a ground to root upon,
Unless on you.”

Men must work out their character — must follow their deepest principle. Let this principle be once accurately observed and understood, then their future conduct may be well predicted. “ These things are necessities ” — governed by the most rigid logic. Rebellion being given as the fundamental principle of Percy’s nature, what he will do can easily be prophesied. Indeed, the King himself has all along been acting upon such a view, and, hence, he has determined to put down the insurgent family. The trouble with him, however, is that he has deposed a monarch ; therefore the same inexorable logic perpetually threatens his deposition. Note again that the passage just cited is, perhaps, the most significant one in the entire Tetralogy, which has its logical movement stated here by the Poet himself.

Such is the first thread of the first movement, with its two parties and their respective tendencies. The insurrection though reinforced by the sanction of religion, is falling to pieces through lack of combined action; it is destroying itself. On the other hand, King Henry the Fourth is harassed with the consciousness of his own ethical violations, and is terrified at the universal corruption of the times. Political wrong has begotten moral profligacy, which is now to be unrolled before our eyes in a series of wild pictures and embodied in a kind of hero.

2. This is the second thread of the first movement, to which we now pass. Falstaff is the central figure; he has returned from the war to the city, and is going to make up in carousals for the time spent in the hardship of a campaign. Moreover, he has brought back with him military fame, which he proposes to put to the best advantage. Prince Henry seems to have voluntarily resigned to him the credit of having slain Hotspur, and tells him in the preceding drama:—

“Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back;
For my part, if a lie may do the grace
I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have.”

Falstaff, of course, accepts the false reputation and makes use of it to escape many a difficulty. Through it he will elude the grasp of justice and replenish his empty purse. He keeps sinking

deeper and deeper into the slough of sensuality, while Prince Henry is rising out of it into a new life.

At first the Fat Knight appears before us in a rather unamiable mood. He is angry at the Prince, whom he backbites for having made sport of him; the two are manifestly separating. Next Falstaff berates the tradesman with whom he can get no credit; this is one among a number of hints which indicate a conflict between the shop-keeper and the gentleman; chivalry is clearly on the decline in these "costermonger days." But here comes the Chief Justice, about to call him to account for the Gadshill robbery, and for misleading the Prince. Falstaff shows his usual dexterity in defense; it is, however, the report of his "service at Shrewsbury" which rescues him. He is also supposed to be on the point of setting out once more for the field of battle, but he really has no such intention at present.

Sir John is now seen in his domestic relations with his hostess. He refuses to pay his board-bill, and she causes him to be arrested; thence results great turmoil, with second appearance of the Chief Justice. The complaint of the hostess is pathetic: "He hath put all my substance into that fat belly of his." But she has still a stronger indictment against him, namely, a breach of promise of marriage. The Chief Justice commands the satisfaction of the wrongs, but Falstaff

knows his cue well: "I do desire deliverance from these officers, being upon hasty employment in the King's affairs." Thus the employment of such a man by the State becomes the means of protecting the vilest profligacy. It is also seen how the social corruption of the period was fostered by the civil troubles, and how morals are often ruined by politics. Supposed services rendered to the country in time of danger are made to cloak villainy and disarm justice.

Next Prince Henry appears on the scene. He manifests a dissatisfied state of mind; he confesses himself to be indeed sad. The cause seems to be twofold — the sickness of his father, and his own public infamy. Sorrow meet for repentance has touched the young man with its fire. "My heart bleeds inwardly," says he. But nobody would believe any tears of his to be genuine; even Poins, his intimate companion, would think him a hypocrite were he to weep. Association with Falstaff has ruined his good name; it is time to change his course of life, he feels. But there must be one more wild adventure before the close of his gay career. He and Poins are going to disguise themselves as tapsters, and observe Falstaff in his revels at Eastcheap, where several things will be found out.

The scene at the Boar's Head Tavern will not abide much handling. It is the world of sensuality in its grossest forms; Falstaff is its supreme

hero. The immoral elements of society concentrate here in unbridled debauchery; it is a perpetual carnival of swinish passion. Man and woman are both present, outcasts from the institutional relations of life, yet of necessity joined together in some common principle of existence. It is the Perverted Family which now stares us in the face. Let us also, only for a moment, look at its representatives in the two females. There is the hostess, of whom Master Tisick, the deputy, said that she was in an ill name, and we may well believe Master Tisick. She is ignorant and coarse in the extreme, yet not without a touch of sympathy and love. Far more worthy of note is Doll Tearsheet, who possesses wit and culture, but not virtue. Sir John takes particular delight in her company, as she furnishes food both for his intellect and his sensuality. She is, indeed, a sort of female Falstaff, with the same mental endowments and moral defects. Here, too, in this Perverted Family there rises many a throb of noble emotion: "Thou'lt set me a weeping, an thou sayest so" — the tears flow at parting.

Of course no such a revel is complete without a brawl, which is here produced by the intrusion of Ancient Pistol, the swaggerer, whom Doll cannot endure for his "fustian." A strange development of literary taste in a place of that kind, one reflects. But a main result of the Prince's dis-

guise is, he hears how Falstaff calumniates him behind his back. Thus, the breach between them is visibly widened. This adventure at the Boar's Head corresponds to the adventure at Gadshill in the First Part of *Henry the Fourth*; both are similar in plot, yet quite different in their surroundings and their purpose. The former shows the violation of the civil institution, the latter of the domestic institution.

But now we are to see Falstaff's violation of the civil institution in a new phase — a phase which is always certain to make its appearance in a time of protracted war. The recruiting service is seized upon by the corrupter as a means for getting money; men are impressed as soldiers who buy themselves off by bribing the officers. The result is that the State obtains no troops, and the people are everywhere demoralized. Already Falstaff has been engaged in this business; he said in the First Part of *Henry the Fourth* that he had “misused the King's press damnably.” He now goes into the country and begins his villainous work, sowing the whole land with the seeds of corruption. It is a very vivid, yet very true, picture — that one of Justice Shallow and his court. Thus the right arm of the nation is paralyzed for warlike effort without, and its heart within is eaten away by the vulture of profligacy.

Such is the career of Falstaff, before his re-

turn to the army, in his relations to society. His attitude is seen to be negative toward the whole Ethical World. He is the universal corrupter; the destructive sweep of his deeds throws down quite every barrier erected against license and passion. The Poet has shown him in three essential phases: His disregard of the moral obligations of the Individual, his pollution of the Family, his prostitution of the State. Yet he is not the somber villain—he is still an amusing companion; the sparkle of his wit throws a sort of light upon his dark actions. But he is descending; the bestial side of his nature is increasing; his intellect is not what it was, but is growing dim in a sensual chaos. Moreover, the comic interest is becoming less in the increasing bestiality of the character.

Thus the first movement comes to an end. It has shown the nation struggling with Rebellion; a monster which has always two heads—violence without and corruption within; a flame-breathing monster, which not only lays waste the land with fire and death, but also emits a subtle, malarious poison, which long infects the system of the survivors. Yet it is a monster which must sometimes be waked up in order to destroy what is worse; but, when once fed to fatness by success, hard it is to kill him—a task which King Henry has undertaken to his infinite sorrow. Indeed, it is an impossible task for this monarch; he has

himself inhaled too much of that poisonous breath, for did he not first nourish rebellion? Both the monster and the King will die together — both are now dying. This part of the action alone remains to be considered.

II.

The second movement shows the transition from the Old to the New—from moral and national disorganization to the restored country under a new monarch. The elevated thread is made up of two main incidents—the end of the rebellion and the death of King Henry the Fourth — both passing away together and leaving behind a ruler who never was tainted with political wrong, and who has washed away his moral delinquency.

1. The rebels under the Archbishop of York are standing arrayed against the royal troops under Prince John. Before trying the appeal to arms, messages pass between the leaders of the opposing forces; there result two conferences in order to bring the difficulty to a peaceful conclusion. Now follows a discussion of the merits of both sides, maintained by men who are ready to support their principles with their lives. It is an interesting discussion—one that must give the collision lying at the foundation of this Tetralogy. Here we see stated the two conflicting elements

which began with *Richard the Second* and are just now lowering on each other in armed hostility — the right of revolution, the right of authority ; first one side, then the other. To carry the mind back more readily, a son of that famous Mowbray, whom fierce Bolingbroke challenged long ago, is here, eager to fight his father's foe. The whole subject is thoroughly gone over again, wherein we need not follow the speaker ; it would be only a repetition of what has been already said. At last, a full satisfaction of grievances is promised and accepted ; the army of the insurgents is dismissed ; peace is the joyful word.

Suddenly the rebel leaders are seized and hurried to the “ block of death,” on the charge of high treason. Prince John tries to hide his action through evasive language, but an unwarrantable breach of faith it remains to the straightforward mind. It has not even the excuse of policy ; the men had laid down their arms, and nothing was to be gained by their death. We feel that this Prince John has inherited the worst side of his father's character ; that under his rule the moral perversity of the time could not be healed. This must be accomplished along with the suppression of the rebellion. Prince Henry is the one who possesses the double gift ; we need no longer wonder why he was kept out of the second expedition. He is the hero of open and honorable warfare, as at Shrewsbury ; not of

treacherous and cruel artifice, as at Gaultree forest.

The rebellion is ended; the nation is now united within itself; the great work of the reign of Henry the Fourth is about completed. One thing remains to harass him — the possible discord in the royal family, owing to the supposed waywardness of Prince Henry. The domestic difficulty will next be settled between father and son. Warwick again comes in with his words of solace, which should be quoted in full as the true theory of the Prince's character: —

“ The Prince but studies his companions
Like a strange tongue; wherein, to gain the language,
'Tis needful that the most immodest word
Be look'd upon and learn'd; which, once attain'd,
Your highness knows, comes to no further use,
But to be known and hated. So, like gross terms,
The Prince will, in the perfectness of time,
Cast off his followers; and their memory
Shall as a pattern or measure live,
By which his grace must mete the lives of others,
Turning past evils to advantages.”

So says Warwick, whom the Poet has before employed as an interpreter to explain what might be misunderstood in his play. But even Warwick is by no means convinced of the truth of his own statements; he spoke to quiet the sick King. Nobody, therefore, in England at that time expected anything good of the Prince; he is a character not comprehended, and, indeed, not

comprehensible by most men to-day. For are not good and evil held to be two absolutely distinct Universes, between which there is not even a thinkable connection? Like the old Florentine Dante's, the Prince's road to Heaven lies through Hell. Already we have noticed some signs of regeneration in him.

There he stands now beside the bed of his dying father, with tears flowing; a softened heart at least, one may say. There, too, is the crown, symbol of the authority to which he will soon succeed; it calls forth many a sober reflection, but, at the same time, the fiercest resolution to retain it on his own brow. The King rouses from his stupor; the last misunderstanding, with sharp upbraidings; then forgiveness and reconciliation between father and son. But the old politician cannot leave the world except in a haze of policy; it was his deep-laid scheme "to lead out many to the Holy Land," so that they would not "look too near unto my state." His last advice is: "Therefore, my Harry, be it thy course to busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels," lest the monster rebellion, may suddenly come to life again. Harry being overwhelmed just now with sorrow, let us answer for him: "Thou cunning old fox, wilt thou not get out of this world in a hurry! Too much has England already had of falsehood — a soul-consuming dragon, worse than rebellion. Thy Harry will march out against a

foreign nation, but with far different motives. Take note that the vulpine breed shall no longer sit upon a throne, but shall be hunted into its dark burrow in the bowels of the earth, amid the gloomy forest." The King's final, very curious, stroke of policy is to die at Jerusalem in the heart of England, and thus fulfill his vow.

2. The Falstaffian thread may now be resumed, and continued to the end. It shows the Fat Hero in war, after his remarkable career among peaceful people. His capture of the Knight Coleville is a piece of extravagant burlesque in the genuine Quixotic vein. It is, doubtless, the true method of portraying such a character on the field of battle. Falstaff as a soldier is a wild burlesque; let him be shown so. We have seen in his previous conduct the utter disregard of all ethical principles; how can he be expected now to fight for them, especially for the State of whose essence his whole life is one violation? But the rewards of courage and patriotism are what he wants. If he can get them by loud pretense, does it make any difference in the enjoyment of them? So he claims at once the recompense of valor—that is something which he can appreciate. Fictitious courage serves as well as genuine, is far less dangerous; this is Falstaff's theory of the matter, nor can a man easily be brought to fight for that which is not in him.

Sir John has now reached quite the summit of

his delusion; from it he is soon to be suddenly hurled down. His eulogy on sack makes appetite not only the controlling, but the creative, principle of intelligence; man's spiritual nature is just inverted thus — quite Falstaff's own condition. His deceit practiced on Shallow is an act of poetic retribution — the rich desert of a knavish simpleton. But, when Sir John imagines that his harvest has come with the accession of the new King, the time has arrived when he must be undeceived by the most emphatic declaration:—

“I banish thee on pain of death,
As I have done the rest of my misleaders,
Not to come near our person by ten mile.”

Yet, if “you do reform yourselves,” as I, the Prince, have done, then we shall “give you advancement.” A new England will that make, indeed, if thoroughly carried out; the whole element represented by Falstaff must now sink out of sight or be regenerated. What else is said here but that, political rebellion being dead, moral corruption must die, too, or be buried alive in some dark cavernous retreat? Truly a New Epoch will now begin under a New Ruler.

The problem of Rebellion, which has occupied the King in both parts of *Henry the Fourth*, is now solved. Two methods have been tried — open battle and treacherous diplomacy. The

spirit of insurrection is subdued, but the struggle has been prolific of every kind of moral violation. This, too, has now been banished out of the royal presence and out of the royal conduct. Thus we are prepared for a changed country, changed objects of national ambition, with a changed King. There must follow a new drama, whose heroic figure is to be King Henry the Fifth.

This is the character which some writers have picked out as Shakespeare's favorite among all the dramatic people whom he has portrayed. The poet is supposed to have given in Henry the Fifth his ideal of true kingship and true manhood — the person who unites intellect and will, the theoretical and practical sides of our human life in the most happy manner. Be this as it may, the poet no doubt felt much enthusiasm for his Harry, and has limned him in a great cycle of development.

The change in Prince Henry spans the Tetralogy, is, we may say, the key-stone of its arch, reaching over from rebellion to the suppression thereof both in a political and a moral aspect.

The career of the Prince has much in common with the course of the human soul as depicted in the great world-poems; he is made to pass through a time of sin, estrangement, negation, ere he can be brought into harmony with himself and the world. As already stated, Dante has to

go through the Inferno ere he can reach the Paradise. Faust has to pass through all the fires of negation, till he reach the final acceptance and reconciliation. But the poet has given a touch to young Henry, which neither Dante nor Goethe has shown, namely, intention. The Prince knows and intends this wrongful life of his to be only temporary, still he enters it apparently conscious of what it is. But Dante and Faust wake up and find themselves in their alienated condition, and the great question with them is, Which is the way out?

The Prince reveals his infinite nature at the start; he will not be limited by his birth, he feels the constraint of life at the court and among the higher classes. The king and nobles are not the social totality; he will be all, especially all England, highest and lowest, for one day he will be king of the whole country. He seeks the humble, nay the vicious class, and makes himself a part of it, evidently with a good deal of relish; still he keeps himself above it, while of it. He thirsts for experience of the total life of the time; he goes to sin in search of it, in spite of the prohibition: *Thou shalt not*. Still he will eat of the forbidden fruit, because it is forbidden. To forbid is to limit — to draw the boundary both upon action and knowledge. The infinite nature of the Prince scoffs at the boundary, leaps over it, even if he fall into the burning

pit; like the true son of Eve, he plucks the unpermitted apple, though there be an abundance of other good fruit in the garden.

This trait is the source of his ultimate salvation. He has only defied one constraint, to drop into another and much worse; when guilt, debauchery and sin have seized him and put him in chains, he is indeed a captive, and held by the hardest master, namely, the Devil himself. That infinite nature of his again revolts at this new limit; he breaks over the boundary of his Inferno and rises, becomes the universal man, not confined or confinable in the narrow Good, or the narrow Bad. Thus he reaches harmony at last in God, his infinite nature finds its true correspondence in an infinite nature, in which he has peace, not the peace of inactivity, but of a boundless activity. He must be perpetually moving beyond his limits in order to be himself. Thus he becomes the religious hero, having put down the great inner rebellion and brought peace to his own soul, before putting down the great outer rebellion and bringing peace to the country.

Shakespeare has thus given him a sweep greater than any other character in the Tetralogy, and shown in him the whole discipline of sin—a new fall and rise of man. The religious outcome of the hero is a necessity. The poet again reveals the vicarious element in literature, by means of this portrait of Henry, who has suffered for us,

and has had his experience for our behoof. In reading his career, we pass through his Inferno ideally, and that is enough; we need not go to Eastcheap really, and associate with Sir John Falstaff. Prince Henry, through Shakespeare, has done that for us, and done it well; we could not get as much, if we should go there ourselves.

HENRY THE FIFTH.

We have now reached the last of the Lancastrian Tetralogy. *Henry the Fourth*, with its two parts, was occupied with the internal affairs of England; it portrays the great national transition from revolution triumphant to revolution suppressed—from civil discord to domestic harmony. The dynasty has been changed and the country has acquiesced. A great ruler has spent his lifetime in this long, wearisome, and painful struggle, the right of which and the wrong of which have torn his mind with their ever-recurring contradictions. But the work is done, and is well done; England is now a unit within herself, and not a mass of warring fragments; the spirit of rebellion has been extinguished in the blood of its noblest and most powerful representatives; no such personage as the gallant Hotspur will again arise to make it attractive with beauty and chivalrous daring.

The result is that a new national life has appeared, whose vigor is pulsating through the whole land with unparalleled energy. England is fired with the hope and ardor of youth; her inward impulse is driving her forward to some

higher destiny; a narrow, insular existence has become too limited for her mighty aspiration. The nation is loudly calling for a great enterprise abroad, wherein it may realize this new spirit by enlarging the country with new territory, and may give expression, by deeds of valor, to the awakened impulse of nationality.

But the nation is chiefly fortunate in the present turn of affairs on account of having a leader, a man who embodies, in the full sense of the word, the national regeneration. Henry the Fifth is now seated on the throne; he, along with his country, has passed through the political and the moral fire which burns, yet purifies; both are one in character and aspiration. The father, Henry the Fourth, could hardly have been the successful leader of a foreign enterprise; his great vocation was to put down domestic revolution—to effect which, cunning as well as violence had to be employed. The function of the subtle politician has ended with his life; the immoral taint which infected his character must also be cleansed from the land. Henry the Fifth steps forth, the warlike champion and purified man; he has overthrown Hotspur on the one hand, and has cast off Falstaff on the other; both conquests are equally necessary to make him the true representative of his people—the outer and inner conquests of an heroic soul.

England, therefore, is seen marching under his leadership to the subjugation of a foreign foe. Nothing remains to be done at home adequate to the national ambition which is bursting forth on all sides; the pent-up energy must find a vent outwards. Into what channel will it thrust itself? Just across a narrow strip of water lies France, the hereditary enemy of the nation; on France, therefore, the storm will be likely to fall. Many an old score is now to be settled between the two peoples. Each has always been a barrier to the other; cannot that barrier be swept down by us, the English? No, not permanently, so one may give the answer here; for it is just that barrier that makes you both just what you are — two distinct nations, England and France. Remove it, and England will suffer in the end quite as much as France; indeed, if she be successful in breaking down all national boundaries, she will lose the very thing which she is so vehemently maintaining, namely, nationality.

But this reflection lies beyond the play — in fact, beyond the consciousness of the Poet. To him, Henry the Fifth seems to be the supreme type of the national hero, and the conquest of France the highest national object. Thus the *Lancastrian Tetralogy* comes to an end; it portrays the truly constructive epoch of English History according to the conception of Shakespeare, showing the glorious rise of the country

from rebellion at home to the subjection of its ancient enemy abroad. Herein, therefore, the loftiest pinnacle of nationality is reached, and the poetical work must conclude. The Yorkian Tetralogy was written first, though it follows the Lancastrian in historical order; the Poet has, in consequence, not developed the inner ground of the Wars of the Roses. The play of *Henry the Fifth* is, hence, the culminating point of the English Historical series.

The structure of *Henry the Fifth* is without its like in Shakespeare. The employment of choruses or prologues to precede every Act, as is the case here, is unknown in any of his other works, if we except the doubtful play of *Pericles*. The object of these choruses seems, in the main, twofold; they announce the subject of the Acts which they are to follow, and mark with some care the large gaps of time which are to be passed over by the mind. Thus they try to connect somewhat more closely the disjointed parts of the drama. The Poet himself clearly sees the loose texture of his work; he is full of apologies, which imply his own judgment of its main weakness. He appears to feel that he has transcended quite the limits of Dramatic Art — the theme is too extensive for representation on a petty stage; he seems almost afraid of turning it into ridicule. Hence he is continually begging the spectator to use his imagination and forget the apparent caricature. In

no other play is he seen to struggle so hard with his artistic form as here; he surges and frets against its bounds on every side. The great exploits of his hero are in danger of appearing farcical on the stage.

The whole action is of the moving, spectacular kind; it is a series of historical pictures selected from one great campaign, with a chorus to explain the general movement and to supply the omitted links. The play, therefore, is closely tied to the external realities of place and time, and is governed to a less extent than usual by an inner controlling thought; hence criticism, whose function it is to unfold this thought, has no very profound task at present. The result is that *Henry the Fifth*, judged by the Shakespearian standard, must be considered as one of the lesser stars of the Poet's dramatic constellation; it is lacking in unity, in concentration, in organic completeness. Still, it must not be esteemed too lightly. As the play moves in the external details of history, much has to be omitted, since the dramatic form is too narrow; such a manner of treatment demands the fullness and diversity of the Epic or of the Novel. The dramatic work must compress all into the one central, glowing point; only those events are to be taken, and only those things are to be said, which embody directly the thought.

As might be inferred from its spectacular character, the play has no inherent division into

movements; indeed, the structure indicates that it is made up of five separate pictures, each of which is preceded by an explanatory prologue. Yet the entire action tends to one supreme event — the battle of Agincourt — in which single effort the conquest of France was accomplished. The drama may be externally divided into two movements. First, the preparation at home on both sides, comprising the first two Acts; secondly, the conflict and its results, terminating in the overwhelming success of Henry the Fifth. England, united within after a slight ripple of opposition, prepares herself for the struggle, passes over to the territory of her enemy, subjugates the country, and tries to confirm its possession by an alliance of marriage with the royal family of France.

The division into threads is, however, strictly maintained; they were called in *Henry the Fourth*, and still may be called, the elevated or serious thread, and the low or comic thread. The first subdivides itself, according to nationality, into two groups — the French and the English — between whom lies the conflict, which is the main theme of the play. Here we must seek for the political elements which control the work. England claims the right to the throne of France, and makes good the claim by force of arms. The second or comic thread has not less than four groups; there are the remnants of the old Fal-

staffian company; the three English common soldiers who have the little intrigue with the King; the group of officers representing the several British nationalities — Welsh, Scotch, Irish, English; to these must be added the French Princess in her conversation with her attendant, Alice, and with the English King. The superabundance here is manifest; it branches out into so many directions that the unity of the work is in danger of being lost — the central thought seems not to be able to control the dramatic luxuriance springing out of the subject.

I.

1. Beginning with the English side of the first thread, we notice at once the remarkable change in the life of the King. He is no longer the wild Prince Harry of Eastcheap, companion of thieves and revelers, but he has become a religious man; he has truly received the new birth, which has left "his body as a paradise to envelop and contain celestial spirits." The caprice of youthful wantonness, "hydra-headed willfulness," has been completely laid aside, and there has been a full submission to the established order of the world. It is clergymen who are speaking; they praise especially his holy demeanor, and wonder at his sudden reformation. Indeed, the play throughout exalts the piety of the King as one of

his main characteristics, and there is, perhaps, no other personage in Shakespeare's dramas who comes so near being a religious hero. The associate of Falstaff has, therefore, fully redeemed his promise of amendment.

His intellectual gifts, which were never dim, seem to be wonderfully brightened and quickened by his moral change. "Hear him but reason in divinity," says the admiring Archbishop, "you would desire the King were made a prelate;" he speaks of matters of policy with the knowledge and skill of the veteran statesman. But, when he comes to his supreme vocation, "list to his discourse of war, and you shall hear a fearful battle rendered you in music." Still greater is his genius for action; he is the true practical man, who strikes boldly, yet at the same time thinks. In fine, he is the all-sufficient hero in whom intellect and will, the speculative and the active principles of man, are blended in the happiest harmony. Neither of these powers paralyzes the other, as is often the case, but each supports and intensifies the other to a supreme degree. And also he is the stronger and better for having passed through a wild period in his youth. "Wholesome berries thrive and ripen best, neighbored by fruit of baser quality," says the worthy Bishop of him, a clerical authority to which we may reasonably submit, though not without some surprise at the source.

Next there is revealed the chief object of his ambition, the object for which his whole career has been a long preparation — in fact, the object in which the Lancastrian Tetralogy culminates, namely, the conquest of France. But he will not proceed to it without being first assured of the justice of his cause. Accordingly he calls around himself his learned religious advisers, who state in full the grounds of his claim, and vindicate his title against the French doctrine of succession. The Clergy thus requite his favors to the Church; they even urge him to conquest, who needed no incitement; the Archbishop of Canterbury addresses him: “Stand for your own, unwind your bloody flag,” and bids him take as a pattern his noble ancestors who once did “forage in blood of French nobility.” So speaks the primate of all England, the chief apostle of peace and good-will among men in the British isles.

It is manifest that the nation is for war; it is not merely sustaining, but even pushing, Henry to the struggle. Yet he is fired with the same ambition; he, therefore, most truly represents the spirit of the country. The Nobles are with him, the People have been always with him, now the Clergy have become the most urgent advisers of an invasion of France. All classes are in harmony; then there is the furious energy resulting from a common aspiration. It is a national enterprise, at the head of which is marching the na-

tional Hero; the outlook is ill for the object which offers resistance to their purpose.

The King organizes rapidly his powers, wisely leaving a bulwark against the Scot "who hath been still a giddy neighbor to us." Then the reply of France is heard; to a denial of the royal claim is added a wanton insult. More impatient, then, is the cry for war. Yet even here in England there is manifested a slight reaction against the general tendency of the nation; this reaction culminates in a conspiracy against the life of the King. Still some embers of revolt remain and give out sparks; thus the old spirit of insurrection will once more appear. Three nobles, most intimate friends of Henry, were ready to thrust a dagger into his heart; but the plot is discovered and the conspirators punished. It is only a momentary gleam, passing into speedy darkness. Rebellion has been put down in the previous reign with vigor and vengeance; it cannot rise now, for other business is on hand to occupy the life of Henry the Fifth. But, after his death, will not the spirit of rebellion dart up again in the face of his successor, and will not the question of title arise once more for settlement? But let us suppress the premonition which the event excites. At present, after this slight reaction, the union is firmer than ever; England—consolidated, as it were, into one body—is eager to be hurled

across the channel into the heart of France, shouting with her monarch the popular war cry: —

“No King of England if not King of France.”

The French group, on the other hand, are introduced discussing the threatened invasion. Their monarch, with the circumspection of age, manifests no little anxiety; he recalls the many examples of English valor enacted on the soil of his own realm. But the Dauphin, with the impetuosity of youth, is eager for the conflict, having no fear of England now, because “she is so idly kinged.” But the clear-headed Constable gives a well-timed warning to the young Prince; he has carefully noted the great transformation of King Henry’s character, whose

— “Vanities foreshadow

Were but the outside of the Roman Brutus,
Covering discretion with a coat of folly.”

Of course the French emphatically reject the claims of England, and the messenger departs with the declaration of war. Thus we are prepared for the shock of armies which is to follow — two great nations are about to grapple in a terrific struggle — though the English predilection of the Poet has given a distinct hint of the result. Such is the faint outline of the leading French characters.

2. Passing now to the comic thread, we behold the Falstaffian group without Falstaff. At the first view this omission seems quite surprising, since the Poet has distinctly promised the reappearance of the jolly Fat Knight, at the end of *Henry the Fourth*. Why he is dropped can be only conjectured; but it is manifest that the Poet changed his mind only after mature deliberation. A little reflection on the part of the reader will fully justify the same conclusion; in fact, the dramatic possibilities of the character had been exhausted in the previous plays—nothing could well be added to the portraiture. Besides, some repugnance to Falstaff must have been manifested by the more decent and moral portion of the audience, inasmuch as there are not a few persons of the present day who cannot endure his appearance and behavior. Personally, we would like to have seen his enormous bulk again on the stage and heard some of his monstrous lies, but, upon the second thought, it is well as it is; we, too, like the Prince, have had enough of his society for our own good, and should now consent to a permanent separation. Only the death of poor Jack is told; it looks as if he had experienced a hard struggle in his last hours, wrestling with repentance; and we repeat involuntarily the sigh of Prince Henry on the field of Shrewsbury: “I could have better spared a better man.”

The remaining members of this comic group are brought forward from *Henry the Fourth*, and need not be characterized in detail. It is still the reverse side of society — the immoral element — in the present case transmitted to a happier era from a period of civil discord. Its importance is much diminished; still, it is here, following in the track of war, and the whole company is about to cross the channel with the army, not for the purpose of patriotism, but of plunder. The contrast to the general feeling of the nation is most clearly seen in this group of debauched camp-followers. Every great enterprise, however righteous it may be, always has such vermin clinging to it on the outside, and trying to reach its vital juices, but they must be brushed off with the strong hand of merciless justice. The fate of these people in the present undertaking will be the same as that of the external enemy — the French.

II.

In the second movement of the play, which now follows, the scene changes to France, where the struggle at once begins. The key-note is struck by the King in his famous address to his soldiers — the fierce blast of the English war bugle: —

“Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead.”

The sublime theme of the speech throughout is nationality, of which Henry is the most glorious representative in English History. The same spirit permeates this entire series of plays; here is its culmination. Hitherto England had been able to master her internal difficulties; now she is to measure herself with another nation, which it is her weighty enterprise to conquer. If she succeeds, then the English nationality has won the laurel among peoples. The strong appeal is, therefore, to Englishmen, their glory and superiority; it is a battle-prologue, nerving for the conflict which is to follow.

1. Great stress is laid by the Poet upon the behavior of the two armies just before the struggle comes on. The haughty confidence and fatuitous arrogance of the French are brought out in the strongest colors. It is, indeed, the only tragic ground of their fate; they seem to defy Heaven itself to keep them from their prey; on the pinnacle of insolence they are placed, to be hurled down by an avenging Nemesis. Even the cautious Constable gives way to arrogant boasting. A herald is sent to King Henry demanding ransom before the battle is fought; the common soldiers play at dice for English captives that are not yet taken. To the entire French army the victory seems to be won before the engagement; their camp is a scene of wild frolic and impatience. Very necessary and skillful is

this motive of impious arrogance, in order to detach the sympathy of the hearer or reader from the side of the French, for they are really defending their nationality, while the English are assailing it; their cause is in every way the more rightful. Indeed, the English are not only committing a wrong against a neighboring nation, but against themselves; they are logically destroying their own supreme principle in the present conflict, namely, nationality. All of which is felt by the Poet, and its effects artfully guarded against by introducing an old Greek tragic motive—human arrogance humbled by a leveling Nemesis.

In the strongest contrast to the action of the French is the conduct of the English; from the noble down to the private soldier there is a feeling of humility—indeed, of depression, though not of despair. They all think that the result will be very doubtful; gloomy forebodings haunt them; still, the staunchest resolution pervades the host. But there is one Englishman who is animated by the most exalted hope, who sees in the present emergency the greatest opportunity of his life or of his century—it is King Henry himself. He moves around among his soldiers, giving a word of encouragement to all; he is full of religious fervor—prayer is often on his lips; nor, on the other hand, does he forget even in the most trying hour of his life to play a

good joke on a common soldier. He still has some of the former Prince Hal peering out of his conduct; he has not lost his sportiveness. Once, however, in a sudden fit of anger, he gives the most cruel order that every soldier should slay his prisoners — a fact which can be reconciled with his general character only by reflecting that his highest principle is the victory and supremacy of his nation, and whatever jeopardizes this supreme end must be removed at any cost. The day of Agincourt is won; King Henry the Fifth comes out of the battle the greatest of English national heroes; at one blow he utterly overwhelms and subjugates the ancient enemy of his country.

For France naught remains but submission; one people passes under the yoke of another. It has already been frequently stated that such a condition of affairs violates in the deepest manner the principle of nationality; there can result from it only perennial strife and calamity to both States. To avoid the difficulty inherent in the situation, to cement the bond between the two nations by domestic affection, the Family is now introduced into the political relation. Henry marries Catherine, daughter of the French King; but the royal woman is not here, as is often the case, made a sacrifice to the State. The famous wooing scene shows that their marriage had its true basis of love, notwithstanding the strong

comic features. But the domestic ties of the Monarchs cannot control the destinies of two great people; the Family is a very imperfect bulwark against the Nation. The political object of the present matrimonial alliance is manifest from the beautiful expressions of the Queen-mother, who gives the true ground of royal intermarriage, in her earnest appeal to the happy pair:—

“As man and wife, being two, are one in love,
So be there ’twixt your kingdoms such a spousal
That never may ill office or fell jealousy,
Which troubles oft the bed of blessed marriage,
Thrust in between the paction of these kingdoms,
To make divorce of their incorporate league,
That English may as French, French Englishmen,
Received each other.”

2. The comic thread of the second movement breaks up into four distinct groups. The first is composed of the old associates of Falstaff; they now meet the fit retribution of their deeds. The immoral company seems to be pretty much wiped out in the course of the war; Nym and Bardolph have been hung; “Nell is dead in the spital;” Pistol, ranter and coward, steals back in shame and punishment to England. Thus debauchery from its first prominence in *Henry the Fourth* is quite brought to an end under the heroic King at the same time with his great national victory.

A second and new comic group is made up of representatives from the four British peoples—

Welsh, Scotch, Irish, and English. They are all working for the common cause, though they have their little bickerings among themselves; they show how the heroic King had united every kind of subjects in his great foreign enterprise. In compliment to the birthplace and blood of Henry, the pedantic but valorous Welshman, Fluellen, is here the leading figure. The comic effect rests mainly upon the pronunciation of the English tongue in a different fashion by each of these persons, thus indicating with a laugh the checkered variety of speech, and men in the English army — a motley gathering, but with the deepest purpose.

Another group is that of the three English soldiers, quite sober when talking together of the prospect of the battle, and not at all very comic figures at any time. But the King comes along in disguise, and they converse with him reprov-ingly; the result is, he exchanges gloves with one of them in token of a future settlement. From this incident springs a little comic intrigue, which ends in the King discovering himself to the soldier, who is overcome with confusion, but who receives a reward for his manly behavior generally. It is such a simple story as would be told among the common people of their beloved leader.

One more comic group can be distinguished, of which the French Princess, with her broken English, is the chief character. She makes the fourth

person employing a brogue in the play. This slender comic instrumentality is quite worked to death; the tendency thereby is to drop down into a farce. In this respect the present play touches the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, in which broken English, spoken by a Welshman and a Frenchman, is the source of much of the fun.

These four groups, composing the second thread, have no very rigid central thought; they manifest rather the appearance of capricious diversity. Yet they all celebrate the internal or domestic triumphs of Henry, while the great battle of Agincourt, given in the first thread, celebrates the external or national triumph of the heroic King. It will hardly be questioned, however, that four comic groups here are too many; confusion results from excessive multiplicity always, and the feeling of the artistic Whole is obscured — or, even lost — in a labyrinth of details.

Such is the conclusion of the Lancastrian Tetralogy. Indeed, the present play, as was before said, may be considered as the culminating point of the whole Historical Drama of Shakespeare; it delineates the ideal ruler in his personal, civil, and military character, and it portrays the ideal England in harmony at home and in supremacy abroad. This Tetralogy is, in the highest sense, a positive work, having a happy outcome; it begins with a revolution and passes

through to final reconstruction. A Drama of the Nation it may be called, as distinct from the Drama of the Individual; for here it is a nation which after many conflicts and obstacles, reaches a happy destiny, at least for the time being.

Looking back at the entire Tetralogy, we notice that the poet has seized the essence of Universal History, and put it into a poem which rounds itself into unity. He has shown the cycle of a nation's development, taking it, so to speak, out of Time and making it eternal as a typical experience of national life. It is the account of a particular period of a particular people, but it images all peoples of all periods, past, present, and future. Thus the work is poetic in the highest sense; it has an universal meaning, which gleams out of its particular shape.

The poet has taken a time of revolution, of civil war — the most important of all wars in the development of the modern State. Such a war is not a war of conquest, not a war of glory; it is rather inglorious, whichever way it may fall out, and the nation engaged in it can only succeed in whipping itself. But this is just the interest and the worth of civil war; it is a grand discipline of the people, which they take unwillingly enough, but they have to take it anyhow; it is the process by which the nation in tears and blood has to free itself of some weak, guilty, or inadequate phase of its life. The right of rebellion and the

wrong of rebellion, are two halves which, put together, make the cycle of this poem, ending in a grand total outburst of the united national spirit.

Every people at some time has to go through this discipline, in order that it may take its step in advance. Not long after Shakespeare's death, England had to pass through this process again — the process of rebellion triumphant and rebellion defeated. Our own national life is made up of these two phases; American History opens with rebellion triumphant, and its last great act has been rebellion defeated. The two oscillations are finally one — the pulse and ebb of historic heart of the world. The rebellion of 1776 and the rebellion of 1861 are the two halves of the one entire cycle of our national discipline; they together make really one revolution, of which the two rebellions are but moieties, which complete themselves through each other, being the positive and negative phases of the same ultimate principle. The North must digest the fact that George Washington was a rebel as well as Jefferson Davis; the South must digest the fact that the one rebel was the father of his country and triumphed, the other rebel was, as far as his deed went, the destroyer of his country and had to be put down.

Thus the deepest experience in our own national life is but another manifestation of Shakespeare's Lancastrian Tetralogy. The poem is

universal, belongs to all time, yet has its setting in a certain period of time. The forms which truth takes are temporal, the truth itself is eternal. Yet it must have these forms in order to manifest itself. And the manifestation also is in a process. In the present poem feudalism is the outer setting; feudal rebellion against the head of the State on the part of the powerful lord gets a death-blow in the person of Hotspur. But the greatest English rebellion, the one not long after Shakespeare's time, proceeded not from the nobility, but from the people, against the King. The double movement of this Tetralogy may well be called the systole and diastole of Time's heart, eternally repeating itself like our own heart-beat, but also eternally moving forward to the higher goal with each pulsation.

The character of Bolingbroke is this double synthesis of rebellion; he is the right rebel, and the right destroyer of the rebel. He is the genetic character; from him springs Hotspur, the image of his political violation carried to the extreme, as well as Falstaff, the image of his moral violation carried to the extreme. But his own son, Prince Henry, completes his work by putting down political rebellion in Hotspur and moral rebellion in Falstaff, thus overarching his father and becoming the hero of the Tetralogy.

In this way we behold here portrayed two grand cycles of experience: that of the nation,

England, and that of the individual Prince Henry. Both have a certain correspondence; both show an alienation, a rebellion, a fall, through which both have to pass, for the sake of discipline, whereby they attain to harmony — harmony, both national and individual, with the divine order.

But there is, behind the bright skies of *Henry the Fifth* a dark, concealed background. A violation has taken place which will in its own time bring the penalty. Nationality is the spirit of England, of these English Historical plays of Shakespeare, of the modern world as distinguished from the Roman Empire, which sought to absorb all nations. But after the anguish and struggle of a thousand years, nationality has been restored to Europe, which now consists, not of one all-devouring Empire, but of a family of Nations, of which England and France have grown to be two members, independent, self-contained, with the same ultimate right, namely, that of nationality. It is this right which England assails in assailing France; it is the highest of all rights, above the right of inheritance specially to which the counselors of Henry appeal, but which cannot stand in the way of the nation, as Shakespeare himself has shown in two revolutionary plays, *King John* and *Richard the Second*. The political principle of modern times, the World-Spirit itself, is violated. The irony of the deed at once begins to show itself; England, in the pride of nationality, marches forth to destroy nationality, and

thus aims a blow at herself, at her own greatest right and achievement. She obtains a transcendent victory which in the end will turn out a terrible defeat; Agincourt is really the loss of her own deepest principle. Such is the danger lurking in all victory; in the irony of history it is apt to change to the very opposite of itself. Only a national recognition and charity can avert such a fate.

Such is the transition from the Lancastrian to the Yorkian Tetralogy in idea, though this idea transcends the consciousness of the poet, who manifestly places *Henry the Fifth* on the pinnacle of his English Histories. But we, looking back through the perspective of three hundred years, must rise above the consciousness of the poet in order to understand him. Instinctively he wrote the Yorkian before the Lancastrian series; but we must see how the former, in thought as well as in historic continuity, comes after the latter. In *Henry the Fifth* there is a violation of the World-Spirit which Shakespeare did not consciously realize, but the penalty must be paid all the same, as we see in *Henry the Sixth*. Later in life the poet will rise into this conception of the World-Spirit as the supreme ruling power of History; such we behold it in the Roman plays, but hardly in the English ones, where the national Spirit is the highest. Success has again brought guilt, and guilt will call down retribution not only upon the individual, but also upon the nation.

HENRY THE SIXTH.

With *Henry the Sixth* we enter upon what has been hitherto called the Yorkian Tetralogy — the series of four plays ending with *Richard the Third*. The violation of nationality committed abroad now returns home — the conquest of France produces the civil dissension of England. It is an age of terror — a tragic age — which has also a tragic termination. Both the contending Houses of York and Lancaster pass away, and England finds peace in a new dynasty.

Henry the Sixth, though one of the least important of Shakespeare's works, seems to be much written about, judging by the number and length of the dissertations on this play. For its authorship is uncertain, and with uncertainty begins learned conjecture, multiplying itself a thousandfold, and never quite reaching anything certain — for then conjecture would be at an end. This whole field we shall avoid, not feeling any sure footing in it; and to grade probabilities is a wearisome and, to most readers of the Poet, an unprofitable task. So much, however, may be said: In *Henry the Sixth* we find some of Shakespeare's earliest and crudest work, and some which it is difficult to believe to be his work at all.

The general subject of the First Part of *Henry the Sixth* is the loss of France through the internal dissensions of the English. Henry the Fifth, who had conquered the enemy abroad and united all factions at home, is dead; when his strong grasp is once released, the repelling elements begin to fly asunder. The House of Lancaster, which had established and maintained itself through the ability of its rulers, now furnishes a totally incompetent monarch to the throne of England — a monarch incompetent at first through immaturity of youth, and incompetent always through weakness of character. The mighty work of the previous Lancastrian Kings begins to undo itself; the last and most glorious exploit — the conquest of France — is necessarily the first act in the great drama of retrogression; the battle of Agincourt, around which English national pride especially entwined itself, is now to be lost on account of the incapacity of the head of government.

The First Part of *Henry the Sixth* is not a great play; even that Shakespeare was its author is denied by many good judges of the Poet's writings. But let this question of authenticity be dropped at once. The organization is rather loose, yet might be worse; the action is not controlled by a strong inner thought, but moves through a series of pictorial scenes in an external fashion; liveliness it has, though only

playing over the surface. That deep, central flame which fuses all the materials of the drama into oneness — of which the events are merely the fiery outbursts — is wanting here, though there is much activity and struggle. The play, however, has one general purpose to which it seeks to give utterance; this purpose, as already stated, is to show the loss of the French territory through English dissension.

The clearest and best point in the structure of the present work is its division into two threads, which may be called the external conflict and the internal conflict. The scene of the first thread lies in France; it portrays the struggle between the French and the English. The former are fighting for national independence, the latter for the subjugation of their neighbors. This is a contest in which England must lose, and ought to lose, for she is really violating her own deepest principle, namely, nationality. The second thread will show the means — internal strife will paralyze her efforts; the hatred of parties will turn from the enemy abroad to the opponents within. The reader, for his own advantage, may note the inherent relation between these two threads — war upon your neighbor seems ultimately to mean war upon yourself.

The movements, which the reader may possibly inquire after next, are not very distinctly marked; the turning-point may be considered to be where

Burgundy goes over to the French, and thus unites his nation against the invader. Yet the whole action only exhibits occurrence after occurrence sweeping away the English conquests. The two threads, however, proceed with perfect distinctness through the entire play. A short summary of each may now be given.

The first thread, as it shows a conflict, is divided into two sides — the French and the English. The French are striving with success to redeem their country from a foreign yoke; town after town, and province after province, are falling into their hands. They have in these wars their heroic character — the supreme representative of the struggling nation. But it is not the King, not a nobleman, not even a man; it is a poor shepherd's daughter named Joan of Arc, now far more famous than the greatest monarch of that age. Truly she is a remarkable appearance — in the history of the world a glowing point of light which darts up and illumines an epoch. Many sympathetic pens have told her story in prose and in verse; she is, indeed, a noble, poetical form — a woman bursting the barriers of class and of sex, and representing the nation; a woman in arms inspiring her countrymen by word and example to the great deed of national liberation. It is a rare phenomenon — perhaps the single instance of its kind in History.

Shakespeare, or the author of the First Part of

Henry the Sixth, has not taken much advantage of the imposing figure of Joan of Arc; he has rather left her character and her mission in a state of perplexing doubt. When the French speak, full justice is done to her wonderful power; she is divinely sent; she has beheld in a vision the one thing needful in the present emergency; she is inspired of Heaven to be the deliverer of her country. But the English ridicule her claims; they even assail her womanly honor, which she, among the French, is represented as having kept unstained; and, finally, they burn her for a witch. English feeling, perhaps, dictated such a portraiture. Between these two opinions the character fluctuates; it has no unity in its development, but sways from one side to the other, finally resting under an English cloud of suspicion. Still the main fact cannot be obscured — a woman of humble station rises to be a national heroine, heroic above all men of that age; the champion of the Family has become the champion of the State.

We now turn to the side of the English, in order to see what offset they have to the wonderful Maid of Orleans. A national hero appears also among them, but of quite a different kind. It is Talbot, a man trained to the use of arms, of great experience in war, and of noble rank. He is mainly the courageous soldier, whose very name puts the French to flight. There is in his actions

a wild daring which magnetizes the troops under him into hugh masses of fiery valor; this wild daring, coupled with a chivalrous, open-hearted devotion to his country, is his characteristic trait. The Soldier meets the Maid; there is much fluctuation in the conflict, but the English poet cannot disguise the fact that the result is general defeat.

But the crowning glory of Talbot's career is the manner of his death. He is a sacrifice to the hatred between two party-leaders, who were also generals in this unfortunate time—York and Somerset; neither will send aid to Talbot in his perilous situation at Bordeaux. He perishes; the English national hero becomes the victim of English dissension—an ominous emblem of England herself. But to his patriotic devotion is now added a new trait of character—parental love. His young son, John Talbot, has just come to France in order to receive under his father's eye a military training; when destruction lowers from every quarter of the sky, the parent beseeches his boy to escape—from out the rugged breast of the soldier is seen to leap the pure fire of domestic affection. But the son is a Talbot; he will not fly from the enemy; his father is going to stay and die—so will he if he be truly a son. The youthful hero, after performing deeds of valor, comes into a dangerous situation, from which he is rescued by the parent. Again the latter begs his only son to escape and preserve

the name of his family; but the answer is perfect in its logic: —

“ And if I fly I am not Talbot’s son.”

That is, the sole proof of sonship is to remain with his father in battle; if he run off, he has not the blood of Talbot in his veins, and the family cannot then be preserved through him, though he should escape.

Such is by all means the most powerful portion of the play; it is an incident which is worthy of the highest inspiration. There is portrayed in the hardy bosom of Talbot a conflict between the parent and the soldier, right in the midst of the battle raging around — a truly tragic theme in the best sense of the word. Father and son perish — both heroes; with them English supremacy in France perishes; the heroic stock of England has degenerated into factious partisans; the old conquerors — Salisbury, Bedford, and finally Talbot — have been killed, one after another, till a peace substantially acknowledging French independence has to be made.

We pass now to the second thread, portraying the internal conflict of England, which runs parallel with the external conflict given in the first thread. There are two sets of partisans, with very different objects in view. The one set is struggling for the control of the weak-minded Monarch. Henry is a cipher in the government;

two great lords, Gloster and Winchester, are fighting for the substance of regal authority. They defame each other on every occasion; the presence of the King himself cannot restrain their mutual abuse; their adherents always have a brawl whenever they meet in the streets, disturbing public order and requiring the interference of the Mayor of London to preserve the peace. Both men seem to be animated merely by a vulgar desire of power; neither stands as the advocate of any great national principle. Winchester is a churchman, and pleads the rights and immunities of his organization; hence Gloster is made to appear as the enemy of the Church — indeed, of religion itself. Still, there is little depth to Winchester's piety or to Gloster's skepticism; a pretext was needed by both to cloak their ambition — this is what determined their religious attitude.

But in these disputes the utter incompetency of Henry stands out in the strongest light; he can not unify his counselors at home — much less is he able to lead his army abroad. He has but to go back to the time of his grandfather when he will find a legitimate King — Richard the Second — deposed mainly on account of incapacity. His own dynasty, the Lancastrian, has no title to the throne except the ability to rule; what then must happen in his case?

Look now to the second set of partisans for an

answer, at present under the leadership of York and Somerset, respectively. York is not seeking the control of an imbecile King, but of the kingdom itself. He is the rightful heir of the throne, being descended from those whom the Lancastrians had set aside. In him the right of inheritance again comes up, since now the right of ability can no longer be claimed for the usurping house. Thus begins the civil conflict known as the Wars of the Roses; the whole question of hereditary title to the throne must be fought over again. Each leader collects around himself a band of retainers whose violence can hardly be restrained; Vernon and Bassett are types of the mutual hate of the two parties — a hate which can be quenched only with blood. But the present drama does not propose to treat of the Wars of the Roses; the beginning is only indicated, to be fully carried out here after.

We now see that the national spirit engendered by the Lancastrians is lost, and with it has perished every reasonable ground for the continuance of their dynasty. France, the great foreign conquest, is gone from their grasp; the crown, unsupported by a strong ruler, must fall back into the hand of the true heir, who is here on the spot ready to assert his right. The play, therefore, leaves us with this new conflict ready to burst forth. To make it join closely with the

next play, the betrothal of Henry with Margaret is introduced, which event finds its whole significance in the two Parts which are to follow.

In the Second Part of *Henry the Sixth* the struggle is wholly internal; France has been lost to the English, and, hence, there is no French thread required to show the foreign war. The strife which England brought upon a neighboring people has turned back into herself; from her own hands she receives the punishment for the wrong done by her to another country, whose right of existence was as good as her own. National retribution is the fundamental principle of this whole Lancastrian Tetralogy — one party is swept off by a second, which, in its turn, is destroyed by a third; thus they rise and fall; every class of men seems to be infected with a corruption whose sole cure is death. The present play shows the transition from the loss of France to the first opening of the great dynastic quarrel — the Wars of the Roses. English dissension, which previously had defeated the English armies abroad, now raises its hand against England herself upon her own soil.

There are two movements, which are very plainly marked, and which present distinct phases of the conflict. The first is the struggle among the Lancastrians themselves — between

those who agree in supporting the throne of King Henry the Sixth, but who, in other respects, are the bitterest enemies. Here there are naturally two main threads, made up of the opposing parties, the one side being headed by Humphrey, Duke of Gloster, the other by Queen Margaret. The result is that Gloster's party is annihilated, but the Duke of York, who has all along been waiting for his opportunity, at once springs up with a new and far more dangerous party. This is the second general movement of the play; the struggle is no longer among the Lancastrians themselves, but between the Lancastrians and Yorkists; the conflict has deepened into a fight against the supremacy of the reigning house. The present government means foreign defeat and civil dissension—it is, indeed, no government; hence its title, which rests upon the capacity of the ruler, is called in question by the true heir. The threads are now the two Roses—the parties of York and of Lancaster.

Beginning at once with the first movement, we notice that the one party at court is grouped around the brother of the late King, the protector of the realm—Humphrey, Duke of Gloster. His power is evidently declining; the marriage of King Henry with Margaret, and, above all, the concessions made in consequence of that event, were contrary to his policy, and meet with his strongest disapprobation. Gloster represents the

old national spirit of England; he cannot be brought to yield the English claim to France by any measure. This marriage, coupled with the surrender of Anjou and Maine, he looks upon as the disgrace of his country. He manifests, in this drama at least, the feeling of true patriotism; he will do nothing against the King; he cannot be seduced into ambitious thoughts, though he is next in succession to the throne. In general, he, amid a crowd of depraved self-seekers, upholds the principle of nationality. His character here will be noticed to be different from, though not inconsistent with, what it was represented to be in the First Part of *Henry the Sixth*, as love of power, which seems to be his leading trait there, may exist along with patriotic devotion.

At his side is placed his wife, the Duchess Eleanor, a haughty, indiscreet woman, whose strongest passion is ambition. She is a germ of Lady Macbeth. She tries to excite the thought of revolt in her husband, but he puts her down with an emphatic reproof. But that which gives her most prominence is the fact that she is the special object of Queen Margaret's hatred. The wife of the Protector and the wife of the Monarch thus manifest mutually the strongest jealousy; the two women fill the court with strife, for both are seeking the same thing—authority. Each plots the overthrow of the other, but Margaret possesses the far subtler character. The Duchess

is beguiled into dabbling with sorcery in order to discover the future destiny of the King and his friends; she is suddenly arrested and banished.

The Yorkists also lean to the side of the Duke of Gloster in this first movement, though not without much ambiguous dealing. Richard, the Duke of York, is, indeed, playing for the crown; his general scheme is to let the Lancastrians eat one another up, when he will step in and seize the prey. At first he proposes to "make a show of love to proud Duke Humphrey;" then he goes to the aid of the other side. Full of treachery and deep dissimulation is his character. It is hard to see wherein he is any better than the ruling powers; in some respects he is clearly worse. No improvement in the affairs of England can come through him; the same moral and political rottenness will continue, and the fiery process of war must go on till both sides be exterminated. Nor need the further reflection be withheld here — his whole generation, if they inherit his character, can never remain long in possession of the throne. His children will destroy one another till his line be extinct; then there may be some hope for peace to England.

But other Yorkists are different. The Nevills — Salisbury and Warwick — cling to the Duke of Gloster, and are ready to punish his murderers. They are also strongly national, and have been deeply chagrined at the policy toward France.

But the main event of their history now is their conversion to the House of York. Richard traces his title back to the third son of Edward the Third, while the Lancastrians are derived from the fourth son of that Monarch. The argument is conclusive — both the Nevills hail Richard as England's King. The great king-maker, Warwick, whose career hereafter will become most prominent, already anticipates his future destiny: —

“My heart assures me that the Earl of Warwick
Shall one day make the Duke of York a King.”

Passing now to the side hostile to the Duke of Gloster, which is the second thread of the first movement, we observe that its leader is no longer Cardinal Beaufort, but Margaret, the English Queen. This woman remains henceforward the central figure of her party; France has not only reconquered her provinces from England, but the latter is now subjected to the domination of a French Princess, whose domestic rule will be far more fatal than foreign defeat. Margaret is essentially a will-character; her intelligence, though of a high order, is not her supreme trait; that in which she is chiefly deficient is a moral nature. She is not faithful to the Family — she loves another man than her husband; like so many royal women, domestic instincts are swallowed up in political ambition. As ruler of the State, her career is still less commendable than as wife; she

is going to control affairs even at the cost of the existence of the country. No great national purpose is seen in her conduct, or in that of her advisers; to have matters her own way is quite the sum total of her policy. The weak King, her husband, she despises. But she is determined to govern; this brings her at once into conflict with the "good Duke Humphrey," the Protector of the realm; the result is that Humphrey is deposed from his office, arraigned for high treason, and finally murdered in the most treacherous manner. With him was destroyed the peace of England, and, indeed, the Lancastrian tenure of the throne; the last man of that House worthy of rule has been butchered by his own kindred; the Lancastrian Family is rapidly putting an end to its own existence.

The group of men around Queen Margaret are animated with her principle; they are pursuing a selfish ambition to the detriment of their country. No spark of nationality illumines, even faintly, a single action of theirs; the fact is, they are united against the national man, Humphrey, but they would all desert and betray one another with the same readiness for the sake of personal advantage. The faithless cannot be faithful, even to their kind. Suffolk enjoys the distinction of being the Queen's paramour, though he never controlled her as he had expected to do when he brought about the royal marriage. The church-

man also appears in this group — Cardinal Beaufort, formerly known as the Bishop of Winchester; but his importance is much diminished; he has been supplanted in his leadership by a woman. The result of his career is given in a terrific death-scene; a guilty conscience tears away reason and life together. Thus another relative of the King, and staunch supporter of the House of Lancaster, is removed.

King Henry, the helpless puppet around which all these crimes and intrigues are spinning, is the express contrast to his Queen. He absolutely possesses no power of will. His intellect, however, is not by any means so defective; he often shows insight into the true condition of affairs; he tries also to soften the rancor of parties — not by decisive action, but by amiable exhortation. His moral instinct is pure and true; he cannot be brought to believe in the guilt of his uncle Gloucester. Of his religious nature, Margaret and others even make fun, coupling it with his utter weakness of resolution. King Henry is, therefore, supremely contemptible; he is not a man, since he lacks the will of a man, while his wife, as if to set him off more prominently, possesses a masculine energy of character.

The party of Margaret is, therefore, triumphant; her chief enemies are dead or banished; peace would now seem possible. But behold there arises a new conflict—deeper, more intense,

more terrific than before. The Queen has really undermined the Lancastrian dynasty; its national purpose has perished with Gloster. With the might of destiny there comes up the rival claim of York, and finds many supporters. For the Lancastrians are legally usurpers; their sole title was their fidelity to the spirit of the nation, which accordingly supported their House. But this title has perished in an imbecile ruler, in foreign defeat, and in domestic strife; the same reasons which brought them to the throne can now be urged to drive them from the throne.

The second movement of the play has for its theme this struggle between York and Lancaster. There are three phases of the conflict shown here. First, the Pirates are evidently in the interest of Richard; their captain gives an excellent statement of the points at issue, and denounces violently the reigning House. They capture Suffolk on his way to France; the favorite of Margaret meets with a speedy death at their hands. The service of the Queen has thus brought its penalty, but there are more men of guilt still to receive their doom.

The next move against the Lancastrians is Cade's insurrection. Richard, Duke of York, expressly declares that he originated it and employed John Cade, of Ashford, as "a minister of my intent." But the people were full of angry unrest and ready for a revolution. This rebellion

is peculiar on account of its extreme leveling tendency; it reads like the accounts of some popular outbreaks of recent times. The Poet, with much humor, shows the extravagant dreams of the lower classes in a period of social upheaval. It is curious to note the manner in which the insurrection was put down; the cry, "to France, to France, and get what you have lost," is sufficient to change their whole purpose. After all, the strongest feeling of the English people is the conquest of France. There seems to be no direct co-operation with York; the revolt ends without having accomplished anything of significance towards the settlement of the great question between the two Houses.

But the third assault upon the Lancastrians is headed by the Duke of York himself. He had been given the government of Ireland; now he returns with an army for the purpose of maintaining his right to the crown. The battle of Saint Albans takes place; King Henry — or, rather, Queen Margaret — is defeated and compelled to fly from the field, with the loss of Somerset and Clifford. This engagement, however, is not decisive; it rather places the two sides — York and Lancaster — on an equal footing. The throne is not to be won by a single victory or lost by a single defeat — that is, the contest between the Two Roses has just begun; to reach the end another drama must be written.

In the previous play the conflict between the Houses of York and Lancaster opened, but nothing was decided. The two parties are still quite equal; both are willing to compromise their extreme claims. The Third Part of *Henry the Sixth* shows, in general, the transition from this condition of balanced chances to the overthrow and annihilation of the Lancastrians; the crown passes to the Yorkists. The change is one of the bloodiest scenes in History, to which characteristic the play is true in the fullest measure. It is war and bustle from beginning to end—a carnival of barbaric butchery; every character seems to delight in smearing himself with gore; even the language bears often a furious and sanguinary aspect. A red, volcanic fire breaks fiercely from all sides; one towering form after another is swept down and burnt up in that molten stream of vindictive passion. But these outbursts are, in the main, confused, irregular, uncertain; the Titanic forces of Nature are manifestly at work here; the result is not a well-ordered work of Art—not a work of beautiful, though colossal, proportion, but a mass made up of immense fragmentary boulders. In other words, the elements of the grandest poem are here, but these elements are not fused into a harmonious unity. There is often the mighty Shakespearian expression; often the mighty Shakespearian conception of

character; but the whole gives the appearance of terrific struggle — of chaos trying to organize itself, and, in spite of all effort, remaining, to a great extent, formless.

Of course the structure of such a drama cannot be of a high order. There are merely the two hostile parties, which constitute the two threads running through the action; these join in battle, then separate to give utterance to their feelings and opinions, after which they begin the conflict anew. The play is thus a series of battle-pieces, with short intervening pauses; fortune fluctuates from one side to the other, evidently working to destroy both sides. For any division into two movements there is no adequate ground; one event seems to be quite as important as another. But, if the reader thinks it desirable, he can consider the defection of Warwick as the turning-point of the drama, though logically that incident can hardly make good any such claim. Clearly, the whole structure, if not of the lowest, is of the lower organic type.

After the defeat of the Lancastrians, recounted at the end of the previous play, Richard, Duke of York, and King Henry make a treaty settling the disputed succession. But no peace is possible; the extremists in both parties control; their death is the only peace. Margaret on the one side, the sons of Richard on the other, force the violation of the compact. A French Fury is

thus the guiding spirit of the Lancastrians; she is driving them rapidly into the jaws of Fate. Note also the sons of Richard; they are the future rulers of England; this whole war is made in their interest; can any hope of national regeneracy be seen in them? More vindictive, worse in every respect, they are than their father, who is bad enough. Fate cries out — they, too, must be got out of the way before peace can return to distracted England. Let the mills of the gods now begin grinding.

Another battle takes place; Richard, the father, is slain — slain by butcher Clifford, whose father had previously been slain. Blind Nemesis is smiting right and left in the field, gigantic, vigorous, having much work yet to do. Blind she is, verily, for she crops the innocent, sweet youth Rutland — the innocent son of York, not the guilty ones. A piteous spectacle it is — an offenseless child ground to death with the wicked. The last time defeat had overwhelmed the Lancastrians; this time the Yorkists experience disaster. It is well; both races must be deracinated from the soil of England.

Edward — guilty, licentious son of York — succeeds to the leadership; still, much work for retributive Nemesis, presiding Goddess of this Lower World. Another battle; now it is the turn of the Lancastrians to be defeated — indeed, already a second time their turn has come; de-

feated they are; a blow to the right, then a blow to the left — all will be felled at last. Butcher Clifford is here slain, with many others; a father kills his son, a son kills his father. The Family, too, is disrupted and destroyed in this strife of parties; man has become like the fabled swine — ignorantly consuming its own farrow. But Edward is now crowned a king; the House of York has vindicated its title; the usurping, wicked, effete line is driven away. Cannot a little peace be now granted to this land? No; Nemesis must finish her work.

Poor King Henry has, therefore, lost his throne, which it is his curse to have possessed. His regal dignity he would gladly put aside: “Methinks it were a happy life to be no better than a homely swain.” In a tempest, tied to the rudder, which he cannot move, but which always moves him, he well may be weary of the place of Governor. A most amiable, deeply religious man, yet without will — how can he control the raging elements? An angelic nature, indeed, is his, by destiny allotted to rule over demons; he stands out in spotless white raiment mid the soot and flames of Tartarus. Yet he possesses intelligence; he knows the result of this strife going on around him; he sees that the present wretchedness comes from past wrong:—

“I’ll leave my son my virtuous deeds behind,
And would my father had left me no more.”

Also, he possesses a prophetic insight — he foretells to the Yorkists the destruction of their House through its own members, and he beholds in young Richmond the future redeemer of England. A person of a quiet, contemplative nature, born perhaps to be a holy prophet — but, alas, he is King — King of the infernal regions, with countless fiends to be tamed or strangled. Why does he not fly off and leave the Stygian pool? A domestic bond holds him; his other half — or, rather, his whole — is Stygian queen, and clutches him fast to subserve her purposes. A hapless sight is that — an Angel linked to a Fury. The Fury, too, has a will — has all the will; white, angelic Henry is dragged through murky Pandemonium, and to his honor comes out unstained. Still, the act of a man who cannot act is not likely to be ever very wicked.

The House of York is next seen disintegrating within, for it contains elements which can never be harmonized. The marriage of King Edward it was chiefly which caused a double disaffection — that of the brothers and that of Warwick. The latter now revolts, unites with his most bitter enemy — Queen Margaret — and invades England. The Yorkists meet with defeat; their turn has again come; Nemesis is still busy. Edward is taken prisoner; proud Warwick triumphs — is the great king-maker, greater than the king. A power thus rises in the State mightier than the

State; the caprice of an individual changes dynasties. Warwick is really the embodiment of disorganization; he overturned the Lancastrians, now he overturns the Yorkists. A great colossal character he is, the natural outgrowth of the age; in him the spirit of insubordination and rebellion is manifested in its gigantic dimensions. But the mighty figure must be cast down; let his own principle be applied to himself; he once destroyed the supporters of the worthless Lancastrians — destroyed just what he now is himself. Nemesis will bring his deed back to him, swooping from above on speediest wing.

King Edward escapes from captivity; his brother Clarence, who had gone over to Warwick, returns to his ancestral party. Still another battle; whose turn is it now to lose? Lancastrians, answers Nemesis, keeping the account with the most rigid accuracy. Warwick falls; the great king-maker is unkinged by death; his deed has returned. The Poet will hereafter remould his character, with many improvements, in Hotspur; so Henry the Sixth will essentially be reproduced in Richard the Second, both being incompetent rulers, though the one is good and the other is bad.

But why should these Lancastrians be permitted continually to fight their lost battles over again? Let them be annihilated; then the contest can be brought to an end. King Henry is assassinated in prison by Gloster; his son also is

cruelly butchered in cold blood. All the branches of the House of Lancaster are now lopped off except one frail, distant twig; for them Nemesis has done her work. So the drama ends with Edward of York once more upon the throne; incapacity of the monarch has again brought revolution; the Red Rose is plucked, and its petals scattered in the earth.

But, amid all these scenes of savagery one man has shown himself to be the supreme savage — Richard, Duke of Gloster, brother of the King. His body is as misshapen as his soul; ominous breathings he has given out in the course of the play; demoniac rage impels him to the most cruel deeds. But ambition also has filled his thoughts; he wishes to be King — King he will be. Several of his nearest relatives stand between him and the throne; he will have to get them out of the way. Nemesis is again at work; she is here preparing a dire instrument for some terrible purpose of hers. The House of York, too, must be smitten to earth; Gloster is to be the scourge of his family, which now is destroyed from within. But this also will require for its treatment a new drama.

RICHARD THE THIRD.

Not one member of the House of Lancaster remains; it has been torn up root and branch. It was begotten in revolution, in revolution it has perished. It had based its claim upon the competency of its rulers, and the nation had sanctioned this claim in the most emphatic manner; but it, too, has now furnished its incompetent monarch, to whom its own law must be applied with unswerving justice. But it would not submit to the principle which was the very origin of its existence — it resisted to the bitter end; nor does it cease the struggle till the last descendant of Bolingbroke is swept into the grave. The House of Lancaster, therefore, has decreed its own fate through its acts. Retribution is written in bloody letters over its corpse; let it now be buried out of sight of the world, which it will harass no more.

The House of York, the successful instrument of vengeance, is, however, left upon the face of the earth, and is sure to give trouble. It cannot stop in its bloody frenzy. But its enemies have perished: upon what object can it now fix its insatiate jaws? It will, indeed, find a most

deserving object, namely, itself. Moreover, these furious sons of York, are they to be the rulers of England on the ground of competency — of fitness? Title they may have, but the nation declared in the great Lancastrian revolution something more than title to be necessary. The triumph of a vindictive party is not the triumph of the country; there is no rest yet possible. The true reconciliation can only be national; both sides must be united and harmonized in the ruler. Down with the bloody party; the House of York must be cleared away, like the savage forest, by the sharp, swift axe of justice before the soil of England will be blessed with the harvest of peace.

But what is the instrument for bringing retribution home to the House of York? We do not have to look far; it has within its own bosom the poisonous reptile which will sting it to death. In the woeful throes of civil war it has begotten a monster — a fire-breathing, blood-drinking monster — whose delight is to prey upon its own kindred. This is the function of Richard, Duke of Gloster, in the drama before us. He is to annihilate his own House by murdering all who have the misfortune to be connected with him in ties of relationship. The tender bond of the Family, which usually softens even the most obdurate heart, for him marks out the victim of destruction; he cannot rest as long as one of his

blood be left to claim the throne of England. A doomed House is this House of York, whose executioner is Richard, one of its own children. Most bitter, yet true, is the reproach cast by Queen Margaret upon his mother: —

“From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death —
That dog that had his teeth before his eyes
To worry lambs and lap their gentle blood.”

Such a character is not a delightful object of contemplation, and, if the end of art be to give pleasure, then here it has lost its end. But the deep, reconciling principle must never be forgotten. Richard is a necessity of this world's justice — he is the instrument of retribution. The House of York has done that before God which makes it doomed — it simply must be extirpated. Richard, therefore, is tolerated because he is executing a just decree — the edict of impartial, incorruptible Nemesis. To consider him as a villain, pure and simple, destroying the innocent, is a view altogether one-sided; let him also be taken, on the other hand, as a hero who carries out in full measure a divine judgment. The primal law of man here below is responsibility for the deed; violation must bring punishment, and Richard is the man who wields the bloody rod; he thus is the vindicator — unconscious, it is true, but still the vindicator of that

primal law. He is wicked, inexpressibly wicked — an incarnate fiend, red-hot from Hell, if you wish; but is he not the genuine product of this age — of these Wars of the Roses, whose diabolical atrocity culminates in him? Indeed, is he not the true — the truest — child of this House of York, both in birth and in character? He, the arch-fiend, is come to destroy Pandemonium; to burn it up in its own sulphur, with all the devils in it, himself included.

For Richard as a moral man there is clearly no defense, and none will be attempted here; but for Richard as the instrument of retribution — as the burning purifier of England — there is defense, and we may derive from his career even consolation. As the pitiless executor of a world-justice he must be considered in the present drama, if we are to have any relief at all from his portraiture; so he is certainly drawn by the Poet. In art, as well as in morals, there is no justification for him considered merely as an individual, but Richard as the destroying Nemesis of Hell-on-Earth is a necessity of History, and, hence, must belong to its artistic representation in the Historical Drama.

The tone of the play of *Richard the Third* is in the deepest harmony with the character of its one leading personage. Retribution is its beginning, middle, and end—the ominous sound uttered by all living shapes here, from the highest to the lowest.

An over-mastering power hovers in the air above and swoops down upon the guilty world, requiting the wicked deed often with immediate destruction. Human actions must return, and return at once, to the doer, is the spirit of the whole work. It is, indeed, the drama of Retribution — Retribution to the Nation, to the Family, to the Individual. This trait is even too rigidly and too intensely drawn; mankind seems on the point of being crushed beneath the mace of retributive justice; mercy has quite fled from the world. Yet it is the true medicine for the diseased age; the conviction must sink deep into the minds of men that guilt is followed by retribution with the speed and power of the whirlwind.

We observe everywhere in the play what may be called the spirit of irony, both in word and deed. From beginning to end the characters seek to avoid the Nemesis of their conduct, but the means they take to avert retribution are the very means by which it is brought about. The action of these people has an inherent tendency to turn into the opposite of what they intended. Vengeance is their weapon; they hurl it upon their foes, but it is a boomerang which is sure to come back. Hastings rejoices in the execution of his enemies, but does not see the axe swinging over his own head at that very moment. So Buckingham, so the men, so the women, so above all others Richard himself. When he has gained the

crown, then he has lost it, or begins at once losing it. Then his language is full of irony of the diabolic kind, it is his habit to "send souls to Heaven." His very body is a piece of irony; it shows a man turning to the opposite of a man, to a monster. Irony is the mask which Nemesis wears, when secretly chasing down guilt.

There is another peculiarity of the present drama which ought to be mentioned — the frequent use of the curse. It is a terrific weapon, and is employed here with terrific violence. It seems to be something above the individual, dwelling in the Heavens — a mighty God, who, being invoked, rushes down from his Olympian height and dashes the frail human being to speedy death. The curse, however, is the mere utterance of retribution. In order to result in true fulfillment, it must be declared in view of the universal nature of the deed; its spokesman is a seer who looks far down into the consequences of an action often unconsciously including himself in its operation. Lady Anne, when she curses the future wife of Richard, utters the deepest truth of the situation; the wife of such a man must be accursed, because it lies in his character to make a woman wretched; still Lady Anne marries him, and thus curses herself. A groundless imprecation is a monstrosity, to be excluded from every work of Art. The person who curses should only be a voice declaring judgment — the voice of

Nemesis uttering the irrevocable penalty of the deed; petty personal spite is no ground for the curse.

The style of the drama will correspond to the matter. There is no rest to the impetuous torrent, dashing angrily down the sides of the mountain; grand, majestic movement of vast volume it has not. There is a terror in its expression — an unseen hand that almost smites to the earth. The language is mighty, furious, and feverish; it may be called frenzied at times. Titanic struggles and passions are hurled forth in words of Titanic strength and intensity. Human utterance has here reached its limit in some respects. It touches many chords, even the most diverse; at one moment the language of wrath and imprecation sends shudder after shudder through the soul, if not through the body; then follow the tenderest notes of sorrow, swelling into the loud wail of despair. Men gnash their teeth in agony, women weep for the slaughter of their innocent babes; but through all these cries is heard everywhere the demonic irony of Richard — a fiend scoffing over his victims. Many impurities of style may be pointed out — it is, indeed, the nature of the torrent to stir up the ooze and carry it along — but no grammatical cleansing process can possibly purify the torrent into the placid, crystalline brook.

Let us grasp the total action of the play as it unfolds itself before us. It moves from party triumphant and using success for partisan purposes to the complete national restoration which united both parties and was superior to both parties. The victory of York was the victory of one side — of a fragment of the nation; the victory of Richmond was the victory of both sides — of the whole nation. The House of York, having overcome the Lancastrians, disintegrates within; both parties, therefore, are quite annihilated. The surviving leaders, a man and a woman, join in marriage, and thus unite the White and the Red Rose. So the Tetralogy comes to an end in a new constructive epoch.

There are two distinct movements in the play, of almost equal length — a rise and a fall, an ascent to the throne and a descent to death. Their fundamental principles are, respectively, the Guilt and Retribution of Richard; or, what is the same thing from a different point of view, the Retribution of the House of York and the Retribution of Richard. The first movement portrays Richard destroying his own family; he turns against his relatives — even against his own mother; he tears asunder every domestic tie in order to reach the throne. Yet all these evils are the offspring of the guilty House — the consequences of its own deeds. Richard himself is its truest representative, though in punishing its

crimes he is its greatest criminal. The second movement shows the return of the deed; Retribution is brought home to Buckingham, Richard's worst satellite, and to Richard himself. The latter perishes on the battle-field, and his enemy mounts the throne. Richard can gain, but not maintain the throne; he can reach not a positive but only a negative result; with his complete success begins a failure equally complete.

Through all the folds and sinuosities of the action two threads can be seen moving, whose line of distinction is marked by sex. Among the men everywhere the central figure is Richard, who thus becomes the head of different groups, according to the different purposes which he is seeking to accomplish. One relation of the family after another is assailed by him, till every obstruction to his permanent possession of the crown seems to be removed — his brother Clarence, the Queen's kindred, Hastings, his little nephews; such are the subordinate groupings. The second thread is composed of the women of the drama. It is difficult to separate this thread from the rest of the play, but its employment is so peculiar and distinct that it must be looked at by itself. There are here four Queens, two belonging to the defeated Lancastrians and two belonging to the victorious Yorkists. Their chief function, it must be confessed, is to curse their enemies; then they have also to bewail their own

unhappy lot. Being royal women, they unite the political and domestic relations; still, they represent here the Family in its manifold struggles and afflictions. All are wives and have lost husbands; three are mothers and have lost children; one has begotten the monster who is laying waste the country and devouring his own kindred. With every new misfortune is heard the echo of female lamentation and imprecation; some one of them is wronged and bereaved in these terrible times. The two Lancastrian women represent the lost House, but their loudest wail goes up for their lost families. Queen Margaret is the special embodiment of the curse. Its substance is: As Lancaster has perished, so York will perish. The judgment is fulfilled to the letter; the aged Duchess of York, mother of monsters, will be brought to echo Margaret and to curse her own brood. Most sad and woeful is this chorus of high Queens, uttering the shrieks of the Family as it is ground to death between the contending elements of the nation. Moreover two sets of fatherless children add their sorrow and terror to this overwhelming woe of the Family.

I.

Following now our plan, let us grasp the character of Richard in its very germ. He is resolved to wear the crown of England. In his way to it

stand two older brothers and their children; they must be removed, one and all — that is, he intends to destroy his kindred; his means are dissimulation and murder. The great types of deception he cites — Ulysses, Sinon, Proteus, Machiavel; these he can equal — indeed, surpass — in treachery and cruelty. The domestic emotion, strong even in the savage breast, he utterly abjures: —

And this word, love, which gray beards call divine,
Be resident in men like one another,
And not in me; I am myself alone.

No feeling of affection, therefore, can swerve him from his purpose; he is now to be let loose upon his family.

1. The first victim is his brother Clarence. He works upon the weak, superstitious nature of King Edward, who is failing in health; by means of “lies well steeled with weighty arguments” Clarence is thrown into the Tower, while the odium of his imprisonment is deftly turned aside to the account of the Queen, Elizabeth — Richard pretending to sympathize deeply with Clarence. So he drives the two brothers against each other, that they may perish, while he is looking out for himself.

But this Clarence is by no means an innocent man, though he dies of a charge of which he is not guilty. His hands have been imbrued in

blood during the civil wars ; now retribution has come, though from an unexpected quarter. As he lies in prison, conscience begins to work upon him, and in a dream which he narrates there is beheld the dark picture of his guilt. Perjury and murder stain his soul, and, as he approaches the confines of the future world, he hears the dire voices of accusation. He is a member of the guilty House — he is to be cut down with his own vengeful instrument ; his own deed is to be served up to him. Listen to his confession : “ I have done those things, that now give evidence against my soul, for Edward’s sake ; ” and Edward has already signed his death-warrant. The doomed family is executing judgment upon its own members — Clarence, the perjured murderer, is himself treacherously murdered. Richard has thus succeeded in his first attempt, and so let us pass to his next plan against his House.

This is directed against the family of his reigning brother, chiefly represented by the Queen, for his brother is already dying of sickness, and need not be proceeded against. She has two sons, still very young, by the present monarch, as well as sons by a former marriage ; she has also brothers. These relatives of hers are the natural protectors and defenders of her small children ; Richard must first get them out of the way. He has already excited much odium against them by representing them as greedy adventurers and in-

triguers at court. The dying Edward effects a hollow reconciliation between the two hostile parties ; but upon this scene of peace there falls the sudden news of the death of Clarence.

Thereupon Edward is borne from the company in an expiring condition. This is the second death — rapid is the exit of these Yorkists. Edward falls by the torture of disease, aided by the worst torture of conscience. Before his departure he, too, opens his soul, and we behold the agony there. A brother — to whom, more than to any one else, he owed his throne — is murdered under his warrant. Retribution, again swooping down, infixes him ; forebodings for his family may well fill his last moments with anguish, as he addresses those around him : “ Oh, God, I fear thy justice will take hold on me and you, and mine and yours, for this.” God’s justice is truly much to be feared in a Yorkian world.

Two brothers are, therefore, gone — cleared out of the way of Richard. Now succeeds the chorus of women and children — the wild, piercing lament of the disrupted Family. The mother, aged Duchess of York, is there with two orphaned grandchildren — son and daughter of Clarence ; then comes the bereaved wife, Queen Elizabeth, mourning for her husband. The domestic relation is all torn and mangled ; the mother, the wife, the child, sad trio of lamentation, utter their respective sorrows, which seem almost to sing themselves the lyrical melody.

But even through their present grief pierces the dim premonition of worse that is to come ; both the Duchess and the Queen have felt, and recognize, the diabolical spirit which is casting the events for the annihilation of their House. A reflection of the same presentiment is given in the conversation of the two citizens ; the gloomy foreboding of the future has descended into the minds of the people. “ O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloster,” says one of these citizens ; popular instinct points out the evil genius of the time with prophetic insight.

But Richard’s work is far from being done, he thinks : Let me now knock down the supports of these orphaned heirs of Edward. Rivers, Grey, Vaughan — brother, son, friend of the Queen — are executed in prison. They, too, are caught in the net of the doomed House, for which they deserted their Lancastrian party ; if not guilty participation, at least guilty indifference, is the charge against them. “ Now Margaret’s curse is fallen upon our heads, for standing by when Richard stabbed her son,” is the penitent cry of Grey. Yes, you did not interfere to save an innocent boy from the butcher ; on the contrary, you went over to the party of the murderers, and shared in their blood-dripping honors. Off with your heads ; such men as you must be got out of England before it is again inhabitable by human beings. So shrieks Retribution, smiting anew with vengeful ire.

The family of the Queen is thus destroyed or scattered — Dorset, her other son, fleeing soon to France. Richard now takes a step further. Hastings was an enemy of the Queen's relatives; so far he could co-operate with the designs of Richard. But he is a firm supporter of Edward's young sons; at this point he stands in Richard's way to the throne and must be removed. Hastings is doubly warned by his friend, Stanley, but he refuses to take the advice. Suddenly Richard trumps up a false charge against him, and demands his head before dinner. He, too, falls under the curse of Margaret, having shared in the bloody deeds of the Yorkists. He aided in destroying the relatives of the Queen and exults in their death, holding himself to be "in better state than ere I was." He should have been their ally; he is slaughtered for the same offense as they — standing in Richard's way to the throne. It is a harsh punishment for simple, blind Hastings, yet it gives back his own merely; when he exults in the death of his enemies he is really exulting in his own death. Let him be satisfied, says ironical Nemesis, handing him his deed. He sees, when it is too late and repents: —

"I now repent I told the pursuivant,
As too triumphing, how mine enemies
To-day at Pomfret bloodily were butcher'd,
And I myself secure in grace and favor.
Oh! Margaret, Margaret, now thy heavy curse
Is lighted on poor Hastings' head,"

Now all the defenders are pretty much out of the way. But his assault upon his family is not yet ended; he orders his tools to “infer the bastardy of Edward’s children” — nay, to declare that Edward himself was illegitimate. Richard thus impugns the honor of his own mother — the very origin of the Yorkian family is nullified as far as possible; even his own claim perishes with the legal right of his House. But, to make his title certain, the young boys of Edward are murdered by his orders. Thus all that stand between him and the throne are removed. Richard has attained the pinnacle in his destructive career toward his family. He has violated almost every domestic relation, one after another; he has passed the summit — now he begins to descend with violent speed.

But the butchery of these young children — what ground can Nemesis have for entangling them in her inevitable net? Innocent babes, smiling in infantile joy, prattling in unconscious prattle — why immolate them? the reader sternly demands. Red-mouthed Nemesis, in a frenzy, answers him: They, too, belong to this House of York, which must be got rid of — they are the young demonic brood, offspring of a fiend-begetting House; burn up the young devils in this general conflagration of Pandemonium. “God’s justice” does, then, visit the sins of the parents upon the children. Both these families — York

and Lancaster — have, with a blood-dripping scourge, smitten every family and every child in England; let now all their branches be cut off and consumed, down to the smallest tendril. Insatiate Nemesis, this may be a justice, and a justice indispensable to a Yorkian world, but it is not a high justice — not a justice through institutions.

2. At these last acts the chorus of female lamentation has redoubled, and, indeed, the cause of grief is more than double what it was before. Yet these Queens have always a political element in their character which hardly consists with their domestic devotion. The loss of the throne affects Queen Elizabeth too deeply for a mother in great sorrow: “Ah, cut my lace asunder,” she cries on hearing of Richard’s usurpation. Still, the death of her two boys affects her maternal soul almost to distraction; but shortly afterwards her political ambition seems for a moment to get the upper hand, by Richard’s proposition for her daughter. Strange woman, strange product of the age — the instinct of the mother and the ambition of the queen in eternal conflict, swaying from one side to the other in a tempest of passion. As wife and mother she has lost two husbands and two sets of children; still, she hopes to be — and, in fact, will be — Queen-mother. Her double nature rocks and tears her heart, but both principles remain in full force.

Then there is Queen Anne, wooed and won by Richard, the slayer of her husband, while she is weeping over the dead body of a father-in-law, slaughtered by the same hand. She is flattered by the wily suitor; nor can she resist his fair promises. She, too, is possessed with the demon of political ambition. To enter the domestic relation with a monster, it is a sacrifice of the woman in her to position. Domestic wretchedness has been hitherto her fate, but now death is the penalty of her choice. She takes to her bosom the destroyer of her family — hence of herself. A plaintive note she, too, utters in this female chorus, full of sad presentiment — then disappears: —

“For never yet one hour in his bed
Did I enjoy the golden dew of sleep,
But with his timorous dreams was still awaked.”

But the Duchess, mother of monsters, has doubtless the saddest lot. All the misfortunes of the rest of the family are hers, with others peculiar to herself. Husband, children, grandchildren, she has lost; besides she is mother of Richard, the death-breathing dragon who drinks the blood of his kindred. To give birth to the destroyer of her own offspring would seem to be the direst fate of motherhood. “Eighty odd years of sorrow have I seen;” both in the quality and quantity of the affliction her case is

the extreme. What is her deed which has brought this mountain of horrors upon her? She has given to the world the House of York; the whole era of calamities goes back to her as its natural origin. Yet, personally, she commits no act which we call guilt, though she is not without offense, as we shall see; she appears in one respect as the best woman of them all — she is quite free from political ambition. Nor does Retribution punish her with death, but the crimes of her family rend her bosom; when the offspring of her body are struck by the axe of justice, she, too, feels the blow. Thus every deed, every punishment of her guilty House, sweeps back to her, thrilling with pain her aged heart-strings. That is the tragic woman, if ever she was portrayed. But her last words are the most painful part of her painful life; after seeing her house perish, almost to the last member, she is compelled to lay her curse upon her only surviving son. Laden with that curse, Richard sinks rapidly to his fate.

This terrific calamity — whence does it come? It seems horrible, monstrous, unnatural. But the Poet is going to give its ground — it is retribution; this is uttered through the mouth of Margaret, the prophetic Fury, who, though outlawed, glides into these scenes, nobody knows whence, and glides out, nobody knows whither, without being seized — a voice coming from be-

yond and uttering the time's doom, a very wraith of vengeance hovering over a guilty world. Everything which has befallen the House of York is a picture of what it did to the House of Lancaster. Margaret was wife and mother; her husband and son were cruelly butchered by the Yorkists. The Yorkian Queens are now what she is — shorn of family and of throne. Her curse has been fulfilled in every particular, being based upon "God's justice;" she gloats over the fall of her enemies, who are reduced to a level with herself for the same crimes. Well may she prophesy; in her own person already have prophecies been fulfilled; she has but to read her own history and fate to the proud victors. She has good reason to believe in retribution, and she easily transfers to others what has happened to herself.

So ends this wonderful chorus of Queens; it will be heard no more in the second movement — the measure of lamentation is full. A woeful undertone to the wicked deeds and swift punishment of the men, it echoes along the drama like fitful moans of the wind through forest; it is the wail of women weeping for their disrupted domestic ties. The chorus has two parts, of different sound, yet in deep harmony — both the Lancastrian and Yorkian Queens, though enemies to each other, suffer the same afflictions, and fundamentally sing the same song of sorrow.

For Margaret's curse is merely her own grief, concordant to the grief of Elizabeth. Man is punished for his political deeds; woman, joined with him in the Family, suffers along with him, even though she be innocent.

II.

We are now ready for a rapid survey of the second movement—the descent of Richard, which appears to begin when he has reached the throne, and is given increased speed by his mother's curse. To ambition he has sacrificed his family, which now, in its supreme representative, prays for his sacrifice. Richard changes; he begins to woo the daughter of his brother, instead of slaying her—it is a new policy for him. Queen Elizabeth seems to yield to his suit, but afterwards we read that she has promised her daughter to Richmond. It is an obscure point in the Drama, but we may suppose that the Queen, touched with political ambition, at first listens to, but at last deceives the butcher of her sons; Richard fails in his new plan—the star of his destiny is beginning to set. The domestic tie, which he has so deeply injured, revenges itself on him by a refusal.

Next, Richard destroys his most cunning and unprincipled tool, Buckingham, who hesitated at the murder of the young Princes. Buckingham

had managed successfully many important transactions, particularly the coronation; it was folly in Richard to throw away such a useful servant. But retribution thereby rays out the more glaring light; Buckingham is treated to that which he has done to others — “underhand, corrupted, foul injustice,” inflicted upon him by the very man for whose benefit his crimes were committed. He also sees the state of the matter too late, and expresses the justice of his punishment:—

“Thus Margaret’s curse falls heavy on my neck,
Wrong hath but wrong, and blame the due of blame.”

But Richmond has landed on the shores of England. Let us give thanks, for he brings death to the monster, death to this age, and an end to this Tetralogy. Messenger after messenger reports bad news—Richard loses his poise amid danger; he feels himself sinking. He marches out to give battle; the hostile camps lie facing each other, when in the middle a strange vision passes before the mind of both captains. The ghostly forms of those whom Richard had murdered rise up before him and bid him think on their wrongs, that he may be unnerved and lose the battle. At the same time they give words of good will and encouragement to Richmond. The Poet has thus indicated that the hour of retribution is come; and the motives of

the play, with its leading incidents, he summarizes in the vision.

Moreover, the scene will aid us in arriving at a judgment concerning Shakespeare's employment of ghosts and supernatural appearances. The conscious intention of the Poet is here so manifest that nobody can deny it, for the ghosts only reiterate what has been fully given in the play without this unreal form. Richard's overthrow and Richmond's victory has been amply motivated; here it is cast into the unconscious presentiment of both leaders. In sleep the foreboding of the soul moulds itself into the distinct image, and there results the dream. The subjective nature of both men is thus shown — one buoyed up with a just cause, the other weighed down with his crimes. What Richard really is comes out in the vision; he might be able to suppress himself when awake. In fact, sleep has relaxed his strong will and we now get a glimpse of his soul, with conscience working there. In like manner the poet broke the will of Lady Macbeth by sleep, before he could show her scourged by remorse. Already Richard's wife, Lady Anne, has spoken of his dreamful unrest during sleep, so that this vision of Richard has been suggested in her words.

Now he for the first time is frightened; the dream has fully revealed, not merely his character to himself — that he knew before — but the cer-

tainty of his punishment. It is the revelation of his own soul concerning his destiny, for Richard hitherto had no faith in retribution; his belief was in successful villainy. Hence his terror.

“ By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers
Armed in proof and led by shallow Richmond.”

But he shuts his eyes, as it were, on the future; stamps out the rising remorse; “ conscience is a word that cowards use.” Utterly reckless, he gives the command to march on — “ if not to Heaven, then hand in hand to Hell.” So he rushes into the fight, seeking to drown conscience in death.

Can we, even in a partial degree, account for the development of such a character as Richard? Has he suffered any wrong which has made him unfold into such a moral monstrosity? Is he a victim? Let us put together what facts we can find, not for his defense but for his explanation.

1st. There is seen in him the wrong of Nature, if wrong is ever done by Nature. That deformity of his is an appearance, which hints of some primal malice, which takes shape in him; at least, he may well think so. He may say: In me the world is out of joint, being partial, wrongful, ugly, demonic; in my creation Nature was in a

Satanic mood, which has passed over into me. Shall I not revenge it? There is in him an elemental malignity, which came with his birth, and which has been specially fostered and quickened by man.

2nd. Even greater than the wrong of Nature is the wrong of his mother, the earliest formative influence. It is clear that she has reproached him since infancy with his deformity ; he has heard as a boy that he had his teeth before his birth, that he came feet foremost into the world, with all the dire prognostications of such unusual events. There can follow but one result from that kind of education ; he has fulfilled the prophecy, which here forces its own fulfillment ; he is driven into certain lines of character just in the tenderest period of development. Many echoes we catch of what his mother was in the habit of telling him : —

A grievous burden was thy birth to me,
Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy,
Thy school-days frightful, desperate, wild, and furious,
Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous,
Thy age confirmed, proud, subtle, bloody, treacherous,
More wild, but yet more harmful, kind in hatred.
What comfortable hour canst thou name
That ever graced me with thy company?

His own mother has looked upon him as a natural monstrosity, and thereby did her share to train him into being a moral monstrosity. She, too, has a touch of the Yorkian demon which has

become incorporate in her son; she has reversed the native instinct of the mother who loves the deformed child with the greater love, as if to make good the wrong of nature, and to save the spiritual from the wreck of the physical element.

3rd. In the same line we continually read about another wrong, that of men, who heap Richard with personal abuse because of his deformity. A whole anthology of stinging epithets might be culled from these plays. Already in the *Second Part of Henry the Sixth* we hear him called, "Thou foul undigested lump, as crooked in thy manners as thy shape." Not one word of pity from man or woman, not even from his own mother, has ever been bestowed upon him; the result is, he is pitiless. He has been reared to abjure all human relations: "I am myself alone." The atmosphere which he has breathed has been that of scorn: can we wonder at his Mephistophelean scoff? But, chiefly, he has had to dissemble his feelings, and hide even the smoke of his malice; the outcome is a most adroit hypocrite. Finally, he has grown up in a time of civil broils and personal encounters; he is a soldier open and daring, as well as an assassin sly and merciless.

Now Richard pays all these wrongs back, to the extent of his ability, which is considerable. Even his own mother is not spared from his counter-stroke; he stands ready to besmire in the

presence of the world, her womanly honor. Not altogether without the penalty has she reared such a son. This is no defense of Richard, but we can see why he had no "love which gray beards call divine." He has been nurtured as the executioner of his family from his cradle.

Accordingly, in this weak piping time of peace, "when he cannot occupy himself with war, or amuse himself with love on account of his shape, he is "determined to prove a villain." He blames Nature, for he has been "cheated of feature by dissembling Nature," which has thus begun with a monstrous act of treachery in creating him

Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up —

but how can he help himself? His grim irony can yet take some delight in seeing "my shadow in the sun," and descanting "on mine own deformity." This deformity is indeed the bitter source of all his thoughts and even of his villainy. He is worse off than another famous villain of Shakespeare, the illegitimate Edmund, who is handsome perchance, and can say "Thou, Nature, art my Goddess," not my devil, for Nature has done as well by him as by legitimate Edgar, his brother. But Richard at last comes to look upon his bodily deformity with a certain Satanic delight, just as he takes pleasure in his own spiritual hideous-

ness. Still he has over women the fascination of the serpent that handed to mother Eve the original apple.

Richard is the humorist of *Inferno*, a human devil jesting with the moral principle of the Universe. The question which he unconsciously proposes to himself, is: Am I or the World's Order supreme? A demonic subtlety of intellect and a demonic strength of will are given to him, and he makes the trial. He must exploit himself in a worthy way, and so he concludes to have a tussle with the divine economy; this heaven-scaling audacity lends him enchantment. One can almost hear his defiant sneer: Of course I shall be hurled from the celestial battlements, but what of it?

In Richmond we have, on the contrary, the religious hero, who considers himself, "thy minister of chastisement," and, in a parallel sense, the national hero, who unites the two parties into the nation. He stands above the dissension which produced the Wars of the Roses; his object is not partisan, but patriotic. With the battle of Bosworth Field a solution is given to the Yorkian Tetralogy — a solution which is essentially tragic, though it points beyond to a reconciliation. Both Houses have perished in all their immediate representatives; their names descend to remote members of each line, who proceed to disown the titles — York and Lancas-

ter — and to found a new House of their own. A man and a woman — the heir of the Lancastrians and the heiress of the Yorkists — unite in marriage, and thus transform the political hate of the hostile Houses into the domestic love of the Family. But this Yorkian Tetralogy is truly one great historical tragedy ; in fact, we may go back and include the whole eight plays, beginning with *Richard the Second*. It was, indeed, the tragic period of English History, in which, not an individual, but the entire nation, became tragic. But such is not the true destiny of England ; there must be a conclusion which is not tragic, as the nation is still surviving. The play of *Henry the Eighth*, therefore, is to follow ; it will bring to a happy termination the English Historical series.

HENRY THE EIGHTH.

In this drama there is always felt to be something foreign to the genius of Shakespeare as revealed elsewhere in his works. Much critical dissatisfaction has been expressed concerning it, and some writers have even gone to the extent of excluding the greater portion of it from the genuine works of the Poet. To enter into the question of authorship is not the purpose here ; it is the domain of unlimited, uncontrolled conjecture, upon which there are at present many squatters, and which can accommodate many more. Let the reader enter and make his choice for himself, since he has as good a right as anybody else. According to the external evidence, however, the claim of Shakespeare can hardly be gainsaid without danger of undermining all his other claims.

Still, the critical dissatisfaction just mentioned, as far as it pertains to the quality of the work, has good grounds — the drama of *Henry the Eighth* is certainly wanting in unity of structure. It lies there in great masses, almost disjointed ; with a little change in the arrangement every Act might be made into a play by itself, with its

plot, central figure, and catastrophe. Yet there are certain characters and threads which run through the drama from beginning to end, thus keeping up a connection of all the parts; still, on the other hand, these connecting threads constitute, not the main, but the subordinate, interest. King Henry, for example, remains as a character of the play from the first Act to the last; he is, however, hardly more than a tool of mightier personalities in the first three Acts. There is the conflict between Wolsey and Buckingham first; second, between Wolsey and the Queen; third, between Wolsey and the King. Then Wolsey drops out entirely. Not enough concentration is brought into the dramatic structure; too much of a tendency of the parts to fall into independence is manifested. This is, indeed, owing mainly to its spectacular purpose, which appeals to the eye rather than to the mind, and, hence it must look to immediate sensuous effects more than to the long and careful preparation of dramatic motives.

The style, too, has in it many elements which are alien to the best style of Shakespeare. The versification has been subjected to the so-called metrical tests; in accordance with these, the foreign portions have been designated. But the difficulty reaches much deeper than the formal meter; it extends to the coloring, to the figurative speech, to the forms of expression — in fine,

to the style generally. Taking the drama as a whole, apart from single passages, we miss the richness, the glow, the Shakespearian ecstasy; when the language is elevated, it is emotional and subjective rather than sensuous and objective. Single passages of great beauty may be found, undoubtedly; but it is in the power of even fourth-rate poets to write beautiful lines now and then. It is the sustained style which marks the great work and great poet — not sudden spurts amid dreary wastes of stupidity.

At this point we may be permitted to go out of the way a little and make a further application of what has just been said. It is often declared by learned critics that here and there, in some disputed play, they “see the hand of Shakespeare;” that here is a scene which “Shakespeare alone could have written;” that lines occur in which “the hand of the Poet is plainly visible.” Thereupon we have a dissection — certain scenes, passages, or even lines, being assigned to Shakespeare, the rest to somebody else. Now, the pre-supposition in such a case is radically false, namely, that every good line or beautiful image must be ascribed to Shakespeare. No fact in literary history is more common than that the mediocre poet may, in his very highest mood, rise to the level of the great Poet — but he cannot stay there. And, conversely, a play handed down as Shakespeare’s, on the best evidence, should not

be taken away from him on account of certain weak and unusual qualities. The Poet must be seen at his poorest, as well as at his best.

A word, too, should be said upon the characterization of the present drama. This is, for the most part, highly lauded, and deemed eminently worthy of the Poet. Yet, on the whole, it lacks completeness and clearness. For instance, Buckingham is one of the leading personages; still, as he stands portrayed, he is a contradiction. He is charged with treason — with even threatening the life of the King. The proof of this charge rests upon the testimony of his servants, but, then, opposed to it is his declaration of loyalty to the King. Was he innocent or guilty? It cannot be told from anything in the drama, yet this must be the central point of his character. There is left only the uncertain inference that Wolsey bribed his servants to commit perjury.

There is a similar doubt concerning Wolsey himself. His enemies charge him with every species of ambition and extortion; we are compelled to accept these accusations without seeing into his soul concerning their truth or falsity. The downfall of the Queen is laid at his door, yet the King explains the matter otherwise, and takes the burden of the separation entirely upon himself. Still, we must ascribe her untoward fate to Wolsey, though both he and Henry deny the

charge. This capital fact of Wolsey's career is thus left in doubt; we can only surmise that he suborned the French Bishop who excited in Henry's mind the doubts concerning his marriage; in other words, Wolsey gave Henry the pretext for divorce. This is not good characterization, not Shakespeare's ordinary method, for here clearness and subtlety are both left out.

Objections also have been made to the outcome of the play, on account of its offense to ethical principles. Henry — at first a weak tool, then a sensual tyrant, always an unprincipled hypocrite — is rewarded in the end for his civil and domestic violations; while his wife, Catherine, though in the highest degree faithful to both Family and State, is punished — is cast off both as wife and Queen, and dies in her unhappy lot. The doubt, too, in the motiving of Buckingham and Wolsey leaves a very unsatisfactory feeling concerning the justice of their fate. Henry certainly deserves no such reward as the success of his unrighteous love and the birth of a Princess, whose glorification is one of the main objects of the play. In all these respects it is in marked contrast to the play which has just preceded — *Richard the Third* — wherein retribution follows so speedily and certainly the deed.

Henry the Eighth brings to a close the English Historical Drama, though its connection with that series cannot be termed intimate. The subordi-

nation of the turbulent nobility, which created so much trouble in the Wars of the Roses, is manifested in the fate of Buckingham; the crown has attained an unquestioned supremacy. The revival of letters and the importance of culture are often indicated; learning has even come to the point of contesting the palm with rank. But the main point which is sought for by every reader as the very marrow of this period is the great religious revolution — the transition of England from Catholicism to Protestantism. Every other issue of that age sinks into insignificance in comparison; there is no meaning in the reign of Henry the Eighth without the Reformation.

The present drama has, undoubtedly, the change of religion as its fundamental theme, for it could hardly have any other, but the event is portrayed with that dimness and ambiguity so characteristic of almost everything else in the work. The revolution of conscience is made to depend on a guilty passion of the King; the only morally heroic character is immolated to a movement whose essence was, if anything, the revolt of morality against corruption. Indeed, it must be confessed that in this moral and religious revolution, as here portrayed, morality and religion are quite left out. It is the *political* element which is brought into prominence, for the Reformation was also a political revolution.

Here is the key of the play — the standard by

which it is to be judged — and every other test is inadequate. The political object of the See of Rome was the subordination of State to Church; all nations of Christendom had ultimately to be subjected to the Pope — not alone in religious, but also often in civil matters. The result was a perpetual strife between Church and State, even in ages of universal Catholic ascendancy; which strife finally culminated in a separation from the Church on the part of certain nations which were determined to be absolute, even in ecclesiastical matters. This gave rise to the Reformation, whose political principle was subordination of Church to State. To be sure, moral and religious freedom was coupled with political freedom, though the former is, not merely omitted, but repeatedly violated, in the present drama.

The action of *Henry the Eighth*, in general, moves from Catholic England to Protestant England; from Catherine of Aragon to Anne Boleyn as Queen; from Henry the instrument of Wolsey to Henry the uncontrolled arbitrary monarch; from the State ruled by a Cardinal of the Church to a State ruled by its own King. The revolution is purely political — at least, as here represented — though it is accomplished in the name and by means of the clerical profession. The civil subsumes the ecclesiastical organization. The revolt of conscience, the rise

of the subjective judgment against formalism and dogma, are left out of sight, having not half the prominence as in *King John* — the very first play of the English Historical series.

It will, accordingly, be manifest that there is a culmination in the play which separates it into two movements, notwithstanding its otherwise disjointed character. This culmination is, in a general way, the fall of Wolsey and the marriage of Anne Boleyn; the one movement shows Henry, who is the central figure of the play as the instrument of Wolsey, till his enfranchisement; the second movement shows Henry freely acting in his religious, domestic, and political relations. The two movements may, hence, be named the *Wolseiad* and *Henriad*. Also, the threads should be taken as two — the King in his political relations, which manifest a variety of forms, and the King in his domestic relations towards the two Queens.

I.

Accordingly we shall first follow out in order the two grand descents of the play — those of Wolsey and Catherine — both of whom suffer shipwreck upon the caprice of the sovereign. Yet in this royal caprice the necessity of History is masking — the spiritual principle of the age.

1. The first thread of the first movement opens with the conflict between Wolsey and

Buckingham; Henry stands in the background — the dupe and the instrument of the Cardinal's ambition. Buckingham is the central figure of a group of high-born relatives and friends; he represents the pride and privileges of the nobility against the new encroachments of "this butcher cur" (Wolsey) and of the men of learning, for now "a beggar's book outworths a noble's blood." Buckingham is himself learned, eloquent, and popular; his birth places him next to Henry in the line of succession to the throne; he is, therefore, a very manifest object of the King's suspicion.

The point about which Buckingham and Wolsey came to an open breach was the alliance with France, which was favored by the latter, but opposed by the former. Particularly the recent meeting in the vale of Andren, which had impoverished so many nobles, was condemned by Buckingham, who saw in it an attempt to weaken his class. Other nobles, too, speak disapprovingly of it for having introduced the looseness and extravagance of French customs. Buckingham proceeds boldly, in spite of the warnings of his friends, and seems on the point of publicly accusing the Cardinal of treason, when suddenly he is arrested himself on the same charge. He sees his fate — "the net has fallen upon me;" he was open and reckless, while Wolsey proceeded with perfect secrecy till he was prepared

with proof at every point. It is hard to tell the extent of Buckingham's guilt, in view of his denials; quite as difficult is it to discover the extent of Wolsey's suborning of the witnesses. It is a great blemish in the characterization of these two leading men that the guilt of each is thus left in doubt. But Henry's suspicion is aroused; Buckingham perishes, leaving a somewhat uncertain impression of innocence; at least he is a most imprudent talker, if his intentions be not bad. But the evidence against him is of doubtful truth, and, hence, no inferences can be drawn from it respecting his character.

We must next try to find the supreme aim of Wolsey's striving, and therefrom obtain a judgment of the man. His great object in this life is the Papacy. Hither every look bends; every act, however contorted its course, ultimately leads to the Chair of Saint Peter. He says in the hour of humiliation that ambition ruined him; the highest object of ambition in Christendom was the Papal Chair. Thus he would be above all monarchs in name as well as reality — above Henry, who would have to submit to him without disguise. Such, then, was his ambition — the love of supreme arbitrary domination, which the headship of the Church alone could confer.

The acts of Wolsey must always be viewed with this supreme end before the mind of the

reader ; it is a weakness of the play that Wolsey himself is not made to indicate his object more definitely, for we have to gather it from the mouths of his most vindictive enemies. His alliance with France and his hostility to Spain have their root in this same purpose. He has failed in getting the Archbishopric of Toledo, the stepping-stone to the Papacy, through the opposition of the Emperor, Charles the Fifth, relative of Queen Catherine; hence his solicitude to treat with France, the ancient foe of England. Buckingham threw himself in the way of the French alliance, and, therefore, he had to be crushed. Wolsey is utterly unscrupulous in his means of attaining his personal end; it is plain that he intends employing bribery at Rome. His immense accumulation of wealth at home is declared to be for the same purpose as his political combinations abroad.

Wolsey is, therefore, the very strongest representative of external domination over the State by the Church. He cares little or nothing for the spiritual purposes of the great religious organization; he wants it for its political supremacy. To be the head of Christendom is his ambition, to which he is just now immolating England. Is it not full time to sever such a relation? The State, to be adequate to its functions, must be supreme in its authority; the citizen also must find the highest pinnacle of political ambition inside

and not outside, of his country. Otherwise, the State is reduced to a means for the See of Rome; this is just what Wolsey is doing. Already he is Cardinal as well as Minister; the minister serves the cardinal. Disrupt the unholy tie; put the Church inside of the State, and not on the outside of it; nay, go further, put the Church inside of the Man — but this is getting beyond the present drama, indeed, we may say, beyond Protestantism in many of its phases.

After Buckingham, Wolsey's next conflict is with Queen Catherine. She has interfered strongly in favor of Buckingham; she has also caused through her influence certain onerous taxes to be repealed, the merit of which repeal Wolsey tries to turn to his own advantage when he cannot obtain the proceeds in money. But the chief ground of his hatred is that she is a Spaniard, and a relation of the Emperor; she thus stands in the way of Wolsey's highest ambition. The Cardinal had already infused into the King's mind certain doubts about the rightfulness of his marriage with Catherine, and the doubts were favored by the unhappy loss of all the male offspring of the royal pair. It is a subtle poison well calculated to work upon a character half hypocritical and half superstitious, like that of Henry. Yet here the drama again leaves us in a haze of uncertainty; the Queen unquestionably looks upon Wolsey as the author of her

downfall, though he denies, and seems to disprove her charges from the mouth of the King. Wolsey, therefore, if Catherine's charge be true, must have instigated the Bishop of Bayonne to question the legitimacy of the marriage—so the reader with hesitation inclines to decide, though such an inference lies wholly outside of the play. The object of the Cardinal was to form a matrimonial alliance with France, in order to further his own plan. He uses the King as an instrument, yet Henry must not be permitted to know his own situation, for his arbitrary temper would render him exceedingly intractable. The time has now arrived when Henry's capricious passion and Wolsey's secret purpose will conflict. The King's love for Anne Boleyn suddenly falls athwart the Cardinal's scheme; the latter undertakes furtively to overreach the King; he is found out—then comes his fall. The eyes of the King are opened; henceforth he is resolved to reign untrammelled by any restraint. This makes him an immoral tyrant, but also it makes him the hero of English Protestantism. He is as little governed by ethical ties as by the authority of the Church.

Thus Wolsey with his great hopes is wrecked—wrecked upon a caprice of the King. His end is hostile to England, at least external to England; though its chief minister, he has his eye upon another object than his country. Thus the political

relation of Rome to the State has become intolerable; it must be broken. Though we may think little of Henry's motives, the result is in the highest degree commendable, indeed necessary. The passion for Anne Boleyn was merely the occasion of what had soon to take place—the little spark that fired the powder magazine of ages. Without the powder, the spark would not have amounted to much. Let there be no more Cardinal Prime Ministers, with eye on Rome; Wolsey is to be the last representative of the class in England.

2. So much for the King in his political relations; we may now consider the second thread of his life—his domestic relations—though they cannot be wholly separated from the political thread. A grand entertainment is given by the Cardinal, at which Anne Boleyn is present; the Cardinal is thus the means of his own overthrow. King Henry also is present, full of gayety and fond of the ladies—not a domestic man. He beholds the fair Anne and exclaims: “By Heaven she is a dainty one”—and the fate of the Papacy in England is sealed. Wolsey—did he but know it as he sits there amid flattery—is falling into the lowest depths of humiliation and repentance, to death.

The change of Queens is now to take place—a change which runs parallel to the change of religion—and each Queen may to a certain ex-

tent be taken as the symbol of her faith. Anne is represented as an artless maid, full of sympathy with Catherine in her trial; she says that she would not be a queen, reading her destiny in Catherine's:—

— “’Tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble lives in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief,
And wear a golden sorrow.”

The unexpected honors of the King overwhelmed her; she does not desert the Queen, yet she cannot resist the King — a simple maid, full of devotion and tenderness, yet without any strength of will or intellect.

Queen Catherine is the most beautiful character—the true heroine of the drama. In her double relation, as queen and as wife, she has been supremely true to both State and Family. She interfered for justice in the case of Buckingham; she came to the aid of the oppressed subjects in their grievances. Her devotion to her husband has been absolute—indeed, too great; she has suppressed all her likes and dislikes in his favor; it has been her great aim in life to dwell in complete unity with him. She combines two traits rarely found conjoined in woman—strength and sweetness; her force of character conflicts not in the least with her amiability. But in her person, though not through her fault,

the two relations collide — political necessity demands a new queen for England. This horrible necessity tears asunder the conjugal bond — unqueened is unwifed. Again the Family is sacrificed to the State; domestic life is swept away by a national requirement.

Such is the historical justification of her fate, though there is no justification for the conduct of Wolsey and Henry. The decree of History is that England must change religions in order to attain to her true destiny. Though such a change involves the disruption of the domestic ties of sovereigns, it must, nevertheless, take place. Such is the conflict of the two irreconcilable principles; each has validity, but one must go down. Catherine is a Catholic, a Spanish Catholic, and relative of the Emperor, Charles the Fifth, the great supporter of the Papacy; hence her political influence must be eliminated if England is to be free from external domination. But her political influence rests upon her being wife of the monarch — thus the domestic bond is involved. The reader may think that this result does not necessarily follow, but the poetic significance of Catherine is to be a representative of some principle; the divorce from her is the symbol of the divorce from the Church. It is true that the drama fails to bring into prominence this historical necessity, and exhibits only the wanton caprice of Henry; for this reason Catherine

seems, not only an innocent, but an unnecessary, sacrifice. Thus, however, there is no real conflict in her destiny, and no tragic motive in her character.

The antagonism between the moral and political spheres, which we have noticed everywhere in the Historical Plays, reaches in *Henry the Eighth* its culmination. It divides the work into two unreconciled spiritual tendencies which clash in the soul with an infernal discord. Undoubtedly all dramas have or ought to have some ethical conflict as the basis of the action, but the conflict ought in some way to be harmonized in its own, that is, ethical domain. We may grant in the present case, that the end attained was the true end of History; but the means employed seems quite to balance the grand historical result. In this respect *Henry the Eighth* has in it an ethical scission which corresponds to that felt in *All's Well that Ends Well*. We may be reconciled at last to the outcome, but it is a forced reconciliation.

Many writers have noticed the connection between the present play and *Winter's Tale*. There is a strong similarity in meter, style, and characters. The two works seem to have been written with a certain reference to each other. First of all is the great resemblance between Hermione and Catherine; both are queens, both are wronged by their royal husbands, both have to undergo a

public trial, at which they make their own vindication; both have similar characters, being alike in long suffering, in queenly power combined with humility, and in presistent love for the husbands who have wronged them. But how different the ethical outcome of the two plays! Hermione obtains the fruits of long suffering and charity in the restoration of the broken bond; not so Catherine. Wolsey, like the guilty Leontes, repents at last, but there is no reward of repentance, such as Leontes receives. King Henry does not repent, and gets the reward notwithstanding. It is manifest that the mediated outcome of *Winter's Tale* is cut off by the real necessity in *Henry the Eighth*, and not determined by the ideal necessity. The poet had to yield to his time, to history, possibly to his own memories. He took his revenge upon his imperfect play by writing another in which the ethical cycle is complete. Legend gave him what history refused — a perfect material in which to work out his highest conception of the world-order. Ethically, *Winter's Tale* is the completion of *Henry the Eighth*.

Still, through all these differences between the two plays, we can see the common family resemblance; they are children of the same father, though the one may be stunted in parts and the other full grown. The leading characters in both show a spirit-likeness, they have funda-

mentally the same inner problem, which is handled in a similar manner, though not with the same result. Here we must seek the final evidence of authorship, and not in the counting of syllables at the end of the lines. At best, such work shows the most external mechanical side of poetry. Might not Shakespeare in some mood have changed slightly his metrical vehicle? Any poet can write a long speech in blank verse with an extra syllable; any body, not a poet, who can write and count, can do it. Fletcher certainly had no monopoly in that business. We can see no sound reason in following those critics who would take away from Shakespeare Wolsey's, "Farewell to his Greatness" at the end of the third act and give it to Fletcher. Metrically it might belong to anybody who can tell off the syllables, but spiritually it belongs to Shakespeare.

II.

The second movement shows Henry as absolute master, both in the political and domestic thread. Wolsey, Cardinal Prime Minister, ambitious of the Papacy, has come to an untimely end. The King's predilection now goes out towards Cranmer, a prelate who did not want the Papacy, but quite the opposite, namely, its annihilation. But Wolsey has left behind a faint reflection of himself in Gardiner, Bishop of Win-

chester, who is seeking to extirpate the “new opinions divers and dangerous,” the main supporter of which he sees to be Cranmer. That there may be no doubt about the matter, the home of these new opinions is distinctly indicated to be Upper Germany. So the religious conflict comes out into bold prominence — the two prelates being the two champions of the respective sides.

Cranmer is on the point of being sent to the Tower by the Council at the instigation of his enemy, when King Henry suddenly enters and takes the part of Cranmer. This is the end of the politico-religious struggle — the King sides with the promoter of the new opinions. As before said, it is less a matter of Church than of State; with Henry it is not even a matter of State, but an arbitrary caprice of passion. Still he receives the support of the nation; his successors to this day have upheld the same policy, or had to surrender the crown; the separation from the Papal family was, therefore, a national act. The ground thereof lies patent: England thus attains complete national autonomy — the supreme object of her striving since the beginning of her history; King Henry, therefore, was acting in harmony with the nation, which supported him; this is his historical justification. But as individual, judged by moral tests, he is a wretch, a bigot, yet a hypocrite — his deepest ruling principle being his passion. Defense there is for his

deed — none at all for his motives. There ought, doubtless, to be punishment for his moral violation; his career, as shown in this drama, looks too much like a career of successful villainy. If Henry had consciously subordinated moral to political considerations, he might have attained the rank of a Hero, as is the case with a number of Shakespeare's characters. But the mainspring of his actions is capricious passion; the good results are an accident, and in no sense come from his intention.

It is possible to regard Henry as possessed of a subtle political sense, deeper than all his caprices; he may have dimly felt that his individual wish coincided with England's will. At any rate the World-Spirit seemed to take a fantastic delight in clothing itself in the unrighteous whims of this monarch. His temporary fickleness bore in it a change which has been lasting; his caprice was a strange caper of history itself.

2. The domestic thread, showing the Queens, remains to be considered. As Anne rises, Catherine descends; the brilliant coronation of the former and the mournful retirement of the latter stand side by side in the drama. Their connection with the general thought of the play is that each Queen is, to a certain extent, the representative of the colliding religions; the change of Queens is a reflection of the change of faiths. Already Catherine has appealed to the Pope — a

jurisdiction beyond the State; this authority is now to be broken by Henry — History's instrument. On the other hand, Anne has been characterized by Wolsey as "a spleeny Lutheran, and not wholesome to our cause." Still both are determined by the political movement of the age, and are not by any means shown as religious zealots.

Catherine retires to Kimbolton, "sick to death;" there she hears of the sad fate of her old enemy, the Cardinal, who died "full of repentance, continual meditations, tears, sorrows," whom she forgives and blesses. She herself is approaching the last hour, though elevated into an ecstatic mood. She beholds in a vision the crown of her future bliss. But last of all she sends her dying message to the man who had most deeply wronged her — "tell him in death I blessed him, for so I will." Still, she yields not a title of her rank and pride: "Although unqueened, yet like a queen and daughter to a king inter me."

Catherine remains the heroine in defeat, she is successful in her want of success. She combines supreme queenliness with humility; meekness and pride in her do not conflict, but really unite to make one character. She never gives up her right, yet never is uncharitable. Morally she is without a flaw; but politically she is selected as the flawless sacrifice to the new age.

But the counterpart to this tragic side is the coronation of the beautiful Anne Boleyn, amid brilliant ceremonies and the hearty applause of the people. Another festival is held at the christening of the new-born daughter, Elizabeth, terminated by the fervid prophecies of Cranmer. For she will inherit the blessings of the present victory; wisdom, virtue, and peace shall reign in her name. A glance into the future reveals the prospect of untold happiness; still, in the somber background is beheld the domestic tragedy, which deeply tinges the feelings. But political enfranchisement has been reached; no foreign domination of the Church will hereafter fetter the souls of Englishmen; here we arrive at the true reconciling result of this struggle, which reconciliation, however, is not without a twinge.

Such is, on the whole, the happy termination of the play of *Henry the Eighth*, and therewith the happy termination of the entire English Historical series; indeed, with a little stretch of our generalizing faculty, we may say — the happy termination of Shakespeare's World-Drama. For this play, in spite of its faults, cannot be spared from Shakespeare's works; it is an integral part of their complete development. Perhaps its defects may be traced to the desire of the Poet to give something like completeness to these historical labors — for it is one of his latest plays. Certainly the work is not well organized — not

well thought out into clearness and harmonious proportion; whether this resulted from haste, from mental changes, or from foreign interpolation, cannot be settled decisively. Nor is the question of such transcendant importance; the work remains just the same, whatever may be its origin; the main duty is to comprehend it in its true inner thought and artistic worth.

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